महा भारत

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

BOOK XIV

THE COMPLETE ASVAMEDHIKA PARVA

TRANSCREATED FROM SANSKRIT

By P. Lal

THE MAHĀBHĀRATA OF VYĀSA

The Complete Āśvamedhika Parva
Transcreated śloka-by-śloka from Sanskrit by P. Lāl

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Two birds sit
on the golden bough
of the pippala tree.
One eats
the sweet fruit.
The other watches.
Both are happy.
One is happier.
Which?

Śvetāśvatara
Upaniṣad IV : 6

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महाभारत

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The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

Transcreated by P. Lāl from the Sanskrit

BOOK FOURTEEN

The Complete Āśvamedhika Parva

The Transcreator

P. Lāl is honorary Professor of English in St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. He was Special Professor of Indian Studies at Hofstra University, New York, 1962-63, and has lectured widely on Indian literature at English, American, and Australian universities. He was a delegate from India to the P. E. N. International Writers Conference in New York in June 1966, and Visiting Professor in the University of Illinois for the spring semester of 1968. Transcreated the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Mahānārānayaṇa Upaniṣads on a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship award in 1969-70. Visiting Professor of Comparative Literature, Hofstra University, spring 1971. Distinguished Visiting Professor and Consultant, Albion College, April-May 1972. Prentiss M. Brown Distinguished Visiting Professor, Albion College, January-May 1973. Robert Norton Visiting Professor, Ohio University, September 1973-June 1974. Visiting Professor of Indian Culture, Hartwick College, September-October 1975. Eli Lilly Visiting Professor, Berea College, February-May 1977. Honorary Doctorate of Letters, Western Maryland College, 1977. Currently at work on the complete English version of the Mahābhārata. Born 1928, married Shyamasree Devi 1955; has a son Ananda, and a daughter Srimati. Recipient of the Padma Shri award in 1970. Delegate to Asian Poets' Conference, Bangkok, 1988; Cambridge Literary Seminar, 1989; Harborfront Poetry Reading Series, Toronto, Canada, 1989. Appointed Suniti Kumar Chatterji Lecturer of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata in June 2005. Seventy five cassettes (each of 90 minutes' duration) of P. Lāl reading his transcreation of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata are available from WRITERS WORKSHOP. In October 1999 P. Lal began a śloka-by-śloka public reading of the transcreated epic to a miscellaneous group every Sunday morning for an hour at the Library of Dharma and Culture in Calcutta to illustrate the importance of Vyāsa's work as an inspiring *oral* experience and not just a print-culture masterpiece, the long-term reading project to proceed till the hundred thousand and plus ślokas are exhausted. 410 hour-long CDs of this recording, taped live are available from WW.

Preface

Everyone knows, of course, that the *Mahābhārata* is the fifth Veda. The other four Vedas are apparently not satisfactory enough in the *śruti* tradition. They are apparently an incomplete divine revelation; the *Mahābhārata* provides the fulfilment. Is it old wine newly fermented? Old Vedic wine in a new Upaniṣadic bottle? Or stale wine replaced by special champagne?

What kind of *viśva-rūpa-darśana* does Arjuna receive from Krishna on Kurukṣetra? Hindu revelation is indeed a baffling phenomenon.

Consider: only Arjuna hears what Krishna says on Kurukṣetra, only Arjuna sees the Universal Multi-Revelation. There are eighteen *akṣauhiṇīs* of Kṣatriyas on the battlefield: not one of them sees or hears anything. What kind of marvellous private colloquy is this? Is it only a symbolic way of saying that Arjuna is grappling with his conscience because he is worried about his status as a Kṣatriya pacifist?

Consider also what the Anu-gītā has to say in the Āśvamedhika Parva. "What you said to me then, O Bhagavān Keśava," says Arjuna, "so lovingly, I have forgotten, unable with my fickle concentration to grasp your meaning. But I have never stopped being curious about what you said." He gets soundly scolded by Krishna: "I am mahā-displeased by your silliness in not understanding what I said. It is not possible for me to repeat all that I then said. Really, you seem to lack *śraddhā* and power of comprehension. It is impossible to do a duplicate presentation of it."

How wonderful! The Gītā (that is either in 700 ślokas, or in another recension, 701 ślokas), which was repeated in exact detail by Sauti, and Lomaharśaṇa, and Śuka, and Vaiśampāyana to hosts of respectful listeners over thousands of years, cannot apparently be repeated by its own begetter!

Instead, Krishna provides Arjuna with the Anu-gītā, which is, in my opinion, in many places as inspiring and insightful a discourse as the original Gītā. There is, however, a very important difference. The original Gītā is, despite its discussion-nature, a

doctrinal document: it has some near-dogmatic pronouncements on the nature of karma and jñāna and bhakti. Krishna does, of course, say graciously, "You are free to choose", but the dangers of wrong choice are made abundantly clear. You had better do better – or else!

Not so in the Anu-gītā. In this, it is Krishna who as at the receiving end of moral, metaphysical and spiritual advice from a very learned Brahmin (i.e. Brahma-knower, not necessarily a biological construct). And this Brahmin teaches through stories, parables and similes. Doctrine, dogma and *daiva*-divinty doom are conspicuously absent in the way he simplifies and clarifies the mysteries of life and the subtleties of dharma.

The precision of the Anu-gītā's Sanskrit, and the clarity of its thought-process, combined with its soaring idealism and lack of direct and implied threats of punishment in case of non-compliance or, worse, failure – all these make it a valuable document which needs more attention than it has received from lay person and scholar in India.

"I shall not be born again –
no, never again!
For as long as this world lasts,
I shall be free,
and working for the welfare of others
I will find my own fulfilment."

[XIV: 16:40]

"There is only one enemy,
there is no second.
This is the enemy
who resides in the heart.
Inspired by that enemy,
I will speak of him."

[XIV: 26:5]



Kolkata
May 2008

Dedication

to
all who emulate the Golden Mongoose
and question blind ritual
and self-glorifying opulence
and are secure in the knowledge
that the mouth of Agni
is not the breath of God.

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य
नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् ।
देवीं सरस्वतीं व्यासं
ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥

Nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya
Naraṁ caiva Narottamaṁ ।
Devīṁ Sarasvatīṁ Vyāsaṁ
tato jayaṁ udīrayet ॥

INVOCATION ~

We namaskāra Nārāyaṇa!
We namaskāra Nara!
We namaskāra finest-of-men Narottama!
We namaskāra Devī Sarasvatī!
We namaskāra Vyāsa!
May victory attend us. We exclaim Jaya!

SECTION ONE

1 Rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra finished the ritual
of *krtodaka* water-libations
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
and mahā-muscled Yudhiṣṭhira,
his senses still in shock,
placing Dhṛtarāṣṭra in front,

2 Emerged from the river.
Mahā-muscled Yudhiṣṭhira,
tears streaming from his eyes,
slumped on the bank of the Gaṅgā
like an elephant
felled by a hunter.

3 Urged by Krishna,
Bhīma stopped him from falling.
Slayer-of-hostile-heroes Krishna said:
"No, you must not lose heart."

4 O rājā, the Pāṇḍavas
saw Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
depressed, asprawl on the ground,
sighing heavily, repeatedly.

5 Seeing that lord of men
so pathetically desolated,
the Pāṇḍavas sat around him,
in sympathetic grief.

6 *Prajña-cakṣu* wisdom-inseeing
mahā-percipient rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
afflicted with son-grief himself,
said to that lord of men:

7 "O tiger-brave Kaurava! Son of Kuntī!
Stand up! Do your duty!
You have followed Kṣatriya-dharma
and conquered the earth.

8 O finest of knowers of dharma!
Enjoy the earth
with your brothers and well-wishers,
to your heart's content.
I do not see any reason
why you should grieve.

9 O lord of the earth!
It is I who should grieve,
and Gāndhārī who should grieve –
for we had a hundred sons,
and we lost them all,
like wealth lost in a dream.

10 Now I am paying the price
for not listening to mahātmā Vidura
who always wished my welfare.
His words of mahā-welfare –
how I repent the wicked-minded way
I spurned them!

11 Divine-darshaned dharmātmā Vidura
advised me then:
'The crimes of Duryodhana
spell the doom of the dynasty.

12 Listen to me, O rājā,
if you want to save the dynasty.
Sentence the wicked-ātmaned rājā
Suyodhana-Duryodhana to death.

13 Stop Karṇa and Śakuni
from meeting him.
Quickly, quietly and cautiously,
order an end to all gambling.

14 Perform the *abhiśeka* - coronation
of dharmātmā rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.
He is the disciplined one
who will govern the world with dharma.

15 If, O earth-lord, for any reason
you prefer not to anoint Kuntī's son,
be yourself the central *meḍhi-bhūta*
and take charge of the kingdom.

16 O lord of men! *Narādhipa*!
Rule impartially,
seeking the welfare of your subjects,
and your kith and kin.'

17 Son of Kuntī!
Far-seeing Vidura advised me,
but I was foolish,
I approved of wicked Duryodhana.

18 The sweet words of serene Vidura
I rejected,
and the fruit I have reaped
is my oceanic grief.

19 King, see the self-created misery
of your old father and your mother!
O ruler of men! *Janādhipa*!
You have no reason to grieve."

SECTION TWO

1 Advised by wise Dhṛtarāṣṭra
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
sensible Yudhiṣṭhira remained silent.
Keśava-Krishna said to him:

2 "Ruler of men! *Janādhipa!*
Excessive grief over one's ancestors
is a source of misery
for them as well.

3 Proceed with the yajñas,
distribute lavish *dakṣiṇās*,
gratify the gods with soma,
and please your *pitṛs* with *svadhās.*

4 Delight guests with food and drink,
give to the needy what they desire.
You know what needs to be done,
You have done what needed to be done.

5 Bhāgirathī-Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma
has enlightened you on rāja-dharma.
So have Kṛṣṇā-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa,
Nārada and Vidura.

6 Why behave like a fool?
Follow the path of your forefathers,
and accept and discharge
the responsibility that is now yours.

7 It is right for a Kṣatriya
to attain heaven by himself.
None of these slain heroes
turned their backs on the battlefield.

8 Discard your grief, mahārāja.
What happened, had to happen.
There is no way now
you can see the slain heroes."

9 Saying this to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
mahā-energetic Govinda-Krishna paused.
Yudhiṣṭhira
said to him:

10 "Govinda-Krishna!
I know you love me deeply.
You have always favoured me
with your friendship and affection.

11 O cakra-and-mace-wielder!
O delighter of the Yādavas!
Śrīmān Krishna!
If you freely and happily

12 Give me leave to go
to the *tapovana* forest-of-tapasyā,
I will be more than grateful.
I know this for sure.
How will I ever find peace,
having killed Pitāmaha Bhīṣma

13 So cruelly, and our guru Droṇa,
a valiant tiger-among-men;
and he who never turned his back
on the field of battle –

14 Karṇa, another tiger-among-men?
O foe-exterminating Krishna!
Whatever karma now can free me
from my brutal deeds –

15 Whatever now I should do
to purify my mind – guide me."
Even as Pārtha-Yudhiṣṭhira was saying this,
wise-in-the-ways-of-dharma Vyāsa,

16 The supremely mahā-energetic one,
arrived, and consoled Yudhiṣṭhira
with these auspicious words:
"*Tāta*! Dear one!

17 *Tāta*! Dear one! What is wrong?
Why this helplessness again and again?
Don't you know Kṣatriya-dharma –
the life-blood of all Kṣatriyas?

18 How can a conscientious king
become a victim of paralysis?
You have carefully listened
to the principles of mokṣa-dharma.

19 How can a king like you
get trapped like this –
a king who knows how to pierce
the māyā of kāma-corrupted karma?

20 How many times have I clarified
the meaning of kāma-corrupted karma!
Your lack of śraddhā prevented you
from learning what should be learned.
What kind of perverse thinking is this!
Don't you remember anything?

21 Stop this! It does not become you!
This is utter stupidity!
O fault-free one!
All forms of *prāyascitta*-expiation
are known to you.
You have heard of rāja-dharma.
You know all there is to know
of *dāna*-dharma charity.

22 O Bharata descendant!
What kind of sillinesss is this –
a man like you,
wise in the ways of all dharmas,
well-versed in the *āgama*-scriptures –
confused in a crisis?"

SECTION THREE

1 Vyāsa said: "It seems to me,
Yudhiṣṭhira, your wisdom is weak.
No human being acts
entirely on his own.

2 It's Īśvara the Divine Lord
who inspires karma good or bad.
O bestower of honour,
why are you so remorse-stricken?

3 So, you think you are guilty
of doing evil karma.
In that case, Bharata, listen
to how such karma is expiated.

4 All evil karma, Yudhiṣṭhira,
can be cleansed –
by tapasyā, by *kratu*-sacrifices,
by *dāna*-charity.

5 O lord of men!
O tiger-among-men!
Yajña, tapasyā and *dāna*
purify evil deeds.

6 Mahātmā gods and antigods
take the help of yajñas
to obtain *puṇya*-merit.
Yajñas are supremely important.

7 It's yajñas that made
the mahātmā gods
so magnificently powerful
that they routed the Dānava antigods.

8 O Bharata descendant Yudhiṣṭhira!
It is time for you to perform
the Rājasūya, the Aśvamedha,
the Sarvamedha, and the Naramedha.

9 Get ready to perform
the rich-in-*dakṣiṇā* Horse Sacrifice
for the satisfaction of all,
as ordained by tradition,
as performed in the past
by Daśaratha's son Rāma.

10 Perform the sacrifice as it was performed
by your mahā-valiant grancestor,
Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta's son Bharata,
a lord-of-the-earth rājā."

11 "It goes without saying," replied Yudhiṣṭhira,
"that the Horse Sacrifice
has power to purify the whole earth,
but something worries me,
and I want you to listen
to what I have to say.

12 I am guilty of genocide.
O finest of the twice-born!
I have no wealth left,
little to give away in charity.

13 And how can I ask these princes,
these young suffering royal survivors,
themselves deprived, wounded, still bleeding,
to help me out with wealth?

14 O finest of the twice-born!
After saving the earth,
how can I tax the afflicted
in order to perform my ritual?

15 O supreme muni!
Granted it was Duryodhana's fault
that ruined all these earth-lords
and heaped infamy on us.

16 Duryodhana laid waste the earth
and emptied all its wealth.
There is nothing left in the treasury
of that wicked son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

17 The earth is offered as *dakṣiṇā*
in the Horse Sacrifice.
The learned say this is the basic requirement.
Without that, all else is worthless.

18 You who are rich in tapasyā!
I have no desire to go ahead
with a substitute or an alternative.
Bhagavan! Revered one!
Favour me with your advice
on what I should do."

19 Kṛṣṇā-Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa
listened to Pārtha-Yudhiṣṭhira.
He reflected briefly,
then he said to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira:

20 "Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
The treasury, now empty,
will soon be overflowing.
There is a golden Himavant mountain –

21 The gold there was left behind
by Brahmins after a yajña
performed by mahatma Marutta.
Son of Kuntī!
That wealth is waiting for you.
It should suffice for you."

22 "O finest of eloquent speakers!"
said Yudhiṣṭhira.
"How did king Marutta amass
so much gold at that yajña?
And when did this yajña
take place?"

23 "Pṛthā-Kuntī's son," replied Vyāsa,
"since you are so eager
to know about the Karandhama king,
let me tell you all
about that mahā-valiant rājā
who possessed so much wealth."

SECTION FOUR

1 "O fault-free Dvaipāyana!"
said Yudhiṣṭhira.
"You know the ways of dharma.
Tell me about the rāja-ṛṣi Marutta."

2 Vyāsa said:
Tāta! Dear one!
This happened in the Kṛta-yuga
when Manu was the *prabhu*-lord
wielding the sceptre of authority.
His mahā-inuscled son was Prasandhi.

3 Prasandhi had a son
named Kṣupa,
Kṣupa's son was ruler-of-the-earth
prabh-lord Ikṣvāku.

4 Ikṣvāka had a hundred sons,
O rājā,
all of them dedicated to dharma.
All of them
were made rulers of the earth
by *prabhu*-lord Ikṣvāku.

5 The eldest son, Viṁśa,
was a brilliant bowman.
Viṁśa's son, O Bharata descendant,
was grace-favoured Viviṁśa.

6 O rājā, his fifteen sons
were all expert archers;
they respected Brahmins,
they spoke the truth.

7 They were liberal in charity,
they delighted in dharma,
they were serene-dispositioned,
soft-and-sweet-speaking.
The eldest of them, however, Khenīnetra,
oppressed all his brothers.

8 Being brave and adventurous,
Khenīnetra dominated the kingdom
and made it trouble-free,
removing all thorny obstacles,
but he lost his people's trust
because he failed to satisfy them.

9 So, O Indra-among-rājās,
they dethroned him
and happily installed as monarch
his son Suvarcas.

10 Mindful of the plight of his father
after the dethronement,
he devoted himself to the welfare
of his kingdom and his subjects.

11 He was respectful to Brahmins,
he spoke the truth,
he was pure-hearted,
mind-controlled, sense-controlled –
a noble man of dharma,
revered by his subjects.

12 So engrossed was he in dharma
that the wealth of his treasury
and the number of his vehicles declined –
so much so that he,
his retinue, his citizens all suffered,
including his dependant allies.

13 Treasury, horses, vehicles depleted,
harassed by enemies,
that rājā and his people
passed through a crisis.

14 But because that rājā
was devoted to dharma, O Yudhiṣṭhira,
popular power was on his side
and his enemies could not harm him.

15 At the peak point of his crisis,
the king cupped his palms
and blew into them as in a conch;
and from that blowing
emerged from the cupped palms
a military force –

16 A striking force with whose energy
he defeated the neighbouring rulers
who were a threat to him.
That is how, O rājā, he became known
as Karandhama,
the "Cupped-Hands Blower".

17 Born at the start of the Treta-yuga
was his son Kārandhama,
the equal of Indra himself,
śrīmān-handsome and graceful,
a king whom even the gods
were unable to vanquish.

18 All the earth-lords
came under his sway.
He was the sole emperor,
all-rich and all-powerful.

19 The name of Karandhama's son
was Avikṣit,
equalling Indra in bravery.
He was proficient in yajñas,
he delighted in dharma,
he was patient and disciplined,

20 Radiant like Āditya the sun,
forebearing like the earth,
wise like Bṛhaspati,
serenely stable like Himavant.

21 He was the joy of his subjects,
that lord of the earth,
delighting them with deed,
thought, word, discipline and patience.

22 That *prabhu*-lord performed
a hundred Horse Sacrifices.
Prabhu-lord learned Aṅgiras personally
officiated at these yajñas.

23 Excelling his father in guṇa-virtues
was his son Marutta,
a mahā-illustrious, dharma-dedicated
cakravartī-emperor.

24 He possessed the strength
of ten thousand elephants.
He was a veritable second Viṣṇu.
When that dharmātmā ruler
decided to perform a yajña,
he ordered golden vessels –

25 Hundreds of them – manufactured –
of pristine purity.
North of Himavant,
not far from Meru,

26 Is a super-mahā-mountain of gold,
where the ritual was performed.
Kuṇḍa-pits were dug,
pots and pans crafted

27 By goldsmiths – impossible to count,
there were so many artifacts.
The site of the yajña
was this mountain.

28 All preparations completed
the dharmātmā ruler Marutta
and his assisting people-protecting princes
performed the yajña there.

SECTION FIVE

1 "O finest of speakers!"
asked Yudhiṣṭhira.
"How did that rājā
become so valiant and virile?
O twice-born one!
How did he get so much gold?

2 *Bhagavan*! Revered one!
Where is all this wealth now?
You who are rich in tapasyā,
how can we get all this wealth?"

3 Vyāsa replied: *Tāta*! Dear one!
They fought among themselves –
Prajāpati Dakṣa's children:
the gods and antigods.

4 So did Aṅgiras's sons,
equally dedicated to their vows,
specially excellently energetic Bṛhaspati
and rich-in-tapasyā Saṁvarta.

5 They competed among themselves,
O rājā,
and Bṛhaspati repeatedly harassed
his younger brother Saṁvarta.

6 So upset was Saṁvarta, O Bharata,
with his elder brother
that he gave up all his possessions,
and preferred a life
of *vanavāsa* forest-exile
and *digvāsā* sky-nakedness.

7 Around this time,
Vāsava-Indra routed the antigods,
assumed sovereignty over heaven;
and appointed as his *purohita*

8 Aṅgiras's eldest son,
the incomparable Brahmin Bṛhaspati.
Before that, rājā Karandhama's priest
was Aṅgiras.

9 Karandhama was a veritable paragon
of valour and virtue.
He was a firm-in-vows dharmātmā,
equalling Śatakratu-Indra in glory.

10 Vehicles and warriors in plenty –
and an assortment of allies –
and expensive beds and bedspreads
and other luxuries –

11 All these were materialised by him
by *dhyāna*-meditation.
O rājā! They issued from the breath
that his mouth exhaled.
His *guṇa*-virtues were so impressive
that all rulers obeyed him.

12 He lived a long enough life,
after which he entered heaven,
with his physical body intact.
Dharma-knowing Yayāti's equal, his son

13 Was Avikṣit, a foe-vanquisher
who conquered the entire earth.
In valour and guṇa-virtues,
that earth-lord resembled his father

14 His son was the valiant Marutta,
who resembled Vāsava-Indra,
and to whom the ocean-girt earth
was irresistibly attracted.

15 Son-of-Pāṇḍu Yudhiṣṭhira!
He challenged Devarāja-Indra,
and Vāsava-Indra in turn
defied him.

16 Lord-of-the earth Pṛthīvipati-Marutta
was a paragon of purity
and guṇa-virtues.
No matter how hard he tried,
Śakra-Indra was unable
to subdue Marutta.

17 So Harivāhana-Indra, the bay-horse-rider,
unable to subdue Marutta,
together with the gods, summoned Bṛhaspati,
and said to him:

18 "O Bṛhaspati!
If you wish to please me,
refuse to perform Marutta's
daiva-and-*pitrya* rituals.

19 I am the sole lord of the gods
and the three worlds.
I am Indra! He is Marutta,
a mere earth-ruler.

20 Brahmin! How can you, who officiates
for the immortal lord of the gods,
so conveniently agree to be the priest
of that mere mortal Marutta?

21 *Bhadraṁ te*! May you fare well!
But make up your mind.
Join the earth-lord Marutta –
if that is what you want –
or give up Marutta,
and happily come to me."

22 O Kaurava Yudhiṣṭhira!
Devarāja-Indra said this,
and Bṛhaspati reflected for a moment,
and replied to the rājā of the gods:

23 "You are the lord of creatures,
you are the prop of the worlds.
You are the destroyer of Namuci,
Viśvarūpa and Bala.

24 O slayer-of-Bala Balasūdana!
O śrī-radiant hero!
O unique god! The only one!
Sustainer of earth and heaven!

25 O Īśavara-lord of all the gods!
Deva-gaṇeśvara!
O Slayer-of-Pāka Pakaśāsana!
How can I serve
as the priest of a mortal
after serving you?

26 O Devendra-Indra!
Be patient with me.
I will never hold the ladle
in a yajña by a mortal.
And listen carefully to this
which I now promise to you:

27 Fire may cool
Earth overturn
Sun become ashes
But I will never swerve
From the promise I make!"

28 These words of Bṛhaspati
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
freed Śakra-Indra
from his fierce envy;
praising the resolve of Bṛhaspati;
he returned to his mansion.

SECTION SIX

1 In this connection (said Vyāsa)
is narrated the historical story,
the ancient *itihāsa* of the dialogue
between Bṛhaspati and wise Marutta.

2 King Marutta heard about the agreement
between Devarāja-Indra
and Aṅgiras's son Bṛhaspati,
and prepared a massive yajña.

3 Fluent-in-speech Marutta
Karandhama's grandson,
planned the yajña,
approached Bṛhaspati, and said:

4 "*Bhagavan*! Revered one!
O rich-in-tapasyā guru!
You advised me earlier for a yajña,
which I want to perform now.

5 I would like you to be the priest.
All the sacred materials
have been procured and assembled.
Yājo'smi sādho!
As our family priest, O holy one,
be in charge of the ritual."

6 "Lord of the earth," replied Bṛhaspati,
"I cannot be the priest.
I am Devarāja-Indra's priest.
I have promised him."

7 "But you are our family priest,
you are our *pitrya*,
I have the deepest respect for you,"
said Marutta.
"I am entitled to assist you.
Accept me as your *yajamāna*."

8 "How is it possible," replied Bṛhaspati,
"for a priest of the immortals
to serve as priest for mortals?
Stay – or leave – as you please.
It is not possible for me
to serve as your priest.

9 O mahā-muscled one!
I cannot perform your yajña.
Find someone else
to officiate at your yajña."

10 King Marutta was deeply embarrassed
(continued Vyāsa).
Filled with misgivings, on his way back
he met Nārada.

11 The earth-lord met the deva-ṛṣi.
In the traditional manner
he did *prāñjali* before Nārada,
who said to him:

12 "O rāja-ṛṣi! O irreproachable one!
You look ill at ease.
What is the matter? Where did you go?
Why are you so troubled?

13 O rājā! O bull-brave earth-lord!
Is there anything I need to know
that you should tell me?
Can I help you in any way!"

14 The concern of mahā-ṛṣi Nārada
was enough to make Marutta
report to him the rejection
he had received from Bṛhaspati.

15 "I went to Aṅgiras's son Bṛhaspati,"
said Marutta.
"He is the ācārya of the gods.
I wanted him
to be the *ṛtvik*-priest at my yajña.
But he spurned me.

16 O Nārada! My guru spurned me!
I feel defiled!
He, my own guru, abandoned me!
I do not want to live any more."

17 Mahārāja! These words of the rājā
(continued Vyāsa)
made Nārada come out with a reply
that revived Āvikṣit-Marutta.

18 Aṅgiras's dharma-dedicated son Saṁvarta,"
said Nārada,
"is currently traversing all the directions
in a state
of sky-clad nudity,
and everyone is wonderstruck.

19 If Bṛhaspati does not want
to officiate at your yajña,
go to mahā-energetic Saṁvarta –
he will happily be your priest."

20 "Your words have given me new life,"
said Marutta.
"O most eloquent of speakers Nārada!
Where can I find Saṁvarta?

21 How can I convince him?
What should I do
to ensure that he agrees?
If he also says no,
there will be no reason for me
to want to live any more."

[XIV:6:22-29]

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22 "Mahārāja," replied Nārada,
"what he is seeking
is a darshan of Maheśvara-Śiva;
so he wanders about
in the city of Vārāṇasī
dressed as a madman.

23 Go and stand near the city-gate.
Place a corpse there.
O earth-lord! Who sees the corpse
and turns his face away – is Saṁvarta.

24 Follow that alert man faithfully,
tail him wherever he goes;
approach him when he is alone,
with your hands folded in *prāñjali*:

25 And if he asks you,
'Who told you about me?'
Say, 'Saṁvarta!
Nārada told me about you.'

26 And if he wants to know
about my whereabouts,
tell him without wasting time,
'Nārada has perished in a fire.'"

27 Marutta said, "So be it,"
(continued Vyāsa)
praised Nārada profusely
and made his way to Vārāṇasī.

28 At the gate of the city
the mahā-renowned king
recalled the advice of Nārada
and placed a corpse there.

29 And it so happened that just then
the Brahmin Saṁvarta
arrived near the gate.
He saw the corpse, and turned back.

30 Hands folded in *prāñjali*,
lord-of-the-earth Marutta
followed him faithfully,
hoping to be instructed.

31 At last, in a lonely spot,
Saṁvarta noticed the rājā,
and flung dust, ashes,
spit and phlegm at him.

32 Lord-of-the-earth Marutta
remained unmoved;
hands folded in *prāñjali*,
he continued to follow Saṁvarta.

33 Finally, utterly exhausted
under the comforting cool shade
of a many-branching *nyagrodha* fig-tree
Saṁvarta sat down and rested.

SECTION SEVEN

1 "How did you recognise me?"
asked Saṁvarta.
"If you wish me well,
tell me who told you.

2 If you come out with the truth,
you will get your heart's desire.
If you tell a lie,
your head will shatter in a hundred pieces."

3 Marutta replied: "I met Nārada,
and he informed me.
You are my guru Aṅgiras's son –
I am overjoyed!"

4 "You speak the truth," said Saṁvarta.
"Nārada knows me
as a performer of *sattra*-sacrifices.
Tell me, where is Nārada now?"

5 "Nārada has perished in a fire,"
replied Marutta.
"The supreme deva-ṛṣi told me about you
and advised that I meet you."

6 Pleased with what Marutta said
(continued Vyāsa),
Saṁvarta exclaimed:
"I can do whatever is required."

7 O rājā! That Brahmin,
dressed like a madman,
rebuked Marutta bitterly
again and again:

8 "I have these weird winds
blowing through my head –
I act on impulse,
I do as I like.
Why do you want a grotesque man
to perform your yajña?

9 My brother Bṛhaspati –
he is the man for you.
He is currently in the service
of Vāsava-Indra.
Why not go to him
and get your yajña done?

10 My elder brother has taken away
all my household goods,
all the sacred material required
for the worship of the gods.
All that I have left with me
is my frail body.

11 O son of Avikṣit!
I pūja-respect him deeply.
Without his express permission,
I cannot perform your yajña.

12 Go therefore to Bṛhaspati
and get his permission first.
Come to me with that,
and I will perform your yajña."

13 "I did go to Bṛhaspati," said Marutta.
"Let me explain what happened.
He is so devoted to Vāsava-Indra
that he refused to be my priest.

14 He told me plainly:
'How can I do yajñas for humans
after performing yajñas for gods?
Besides, Sakra-Indra furbids me
to officiate as priest
at the yajña of Marutta,

15 Because, O Brahmin,
after becoming a lord-of-the-earth,
Marutta has started challenging me.'
And your brother calmly said
to slayer-of-Bala Balasūdana-Indra,
'*Evam-asti*! So be it.'

16 O bull-brave muni!
I would like you to know
that I did go eagerly to him
who had found favour
with Devarāja-Indra,
and he refused me outright.

17 I was dismissed.
All I want to do now
is have you perform the yajña
which I will organise lavishly,
and with the help of your guṇas
I will out-do Vāsava-Indra.

18 I will not ask Bṛhaspati again.
What wrong did I do, Brahmin,
to be rejected like this?
Why should he refuse me?"

19 "Lord of the earth," said Saṁvarta,
"I can do whatever you want
provided you agree to do
whatever I tell you.

20 When Bṛhaspati and Puraṁdara-Indra
learn that I have agreed
to perform your yajña,
wrath will overtake them.
I want you to promise
that you will protect me.

21 But how can I be sure
that you will do so?
Anyway, you must convince me.
You must remove my fear.
If you fail to do so,
I will with my anger
reduce to ashes not only you
but your friends and kinsmen also."

22 "If I fail you," said Marutta,
"may supreme felicity never be mine
as long as the mountains last
and as long as the sun shines.

23 If I forsake you,
may I never have peace of mind,
may I always wallow
in the worst ways of the world."

24 "Listen to me, son of Avikṣit,"
said Saṁvarta.
"Auspicious and excellent
is your yajña plan.
O lord of the earth!
My heart is in it also.

25 I can assure you, O rājā,
you will obtain the wealth
that is supreme and deathless,
and you will excel
even the gods and gandharvas
and Sakra-Indra.

26 As for me, I want neither wealth
nor the yajña-gifts.
I will do that-which displeases
both Indra and my brother.

27 Depend on me to make you
the equal of Śakra-Indra.
Trust me with this truth:
I will do what pleases you."

SECTION EIGHT

1 "A peak of the Himavant called Muñjavān,"
continued Saṁvarta,
"is where Bhagavan Umā-pati Śiva
practises his tapasyā.

2 There, in thickly forested places,
on massive mountain peaks,
in caves of rājā-like hills,
going where his whim takes him,

3 Bhagavān Maheśvara-Śiva,
the mahā-radiant trident-wielder,
accompanied by hosts of *bhūta-gaṇas*,
sports with his consort Umā.

4 There the Rudras, Sādhyas,
Viśvadevas, Vasus,
Yama, Varuṇa,
Kubera and his followers,

5 The *bhūta*-spirits, *piśāca*-carnivores,
the twin Nāsatya-Aśvins,
gandharvas, apsarās,
yakṣas and deva-ṛṣis,

6 The Ādityas, Maruts,
and all the Yātudhānas
variously adore the multi-formed
mahātmā Umāpati-Śiva.

7 O lord of the earth!
There Bhagavān Śiva.
sports with the malformed followers
of the god of wealth Kubera.

8 His śrī-radiance is so glorious
in self-splendour
that it dazzles like the sun.
To behold that brilliance

9 Is not possible for mortals
with physical eyes.
No heat there, no cold,
no winds blowing, no sun shining.

10 No aging there, O king,
no hunger and no thirst,
no death, no fear.
O most victorious of conquerors!
Surrounding the moutain
on all sides,

11 Are goldmines,
dazzling like sunrays.
Protected by Kubera's followers,
who brandish uplifted weapos,

12 And wish to please their mahātmā,
O rājā,
is this mountain of Kubera.
Go there,
and approach
Mahā-yogeśvara Śiva;

13 Praṇāma him, O rāja-ṛṣi,
with supreme bhakti.
Namaskāra Sarva-Siva
and be enlightened

14 By the all-wisdom-knower,
Sarvavidyādhara-Śiva,
and sing his praise
with the following names:

15 Rudra, Śitikaṇṭha, Puruṣa, Suvarcasa,
Karpadī, Karāla, Haryakṣa, Varda;

16 Tryakṣa, Pūṣṇa-dantabhida, Vāmana, Śiva,
Yāma, Avyakta-rūpa, Sadvrtta, Śaṅkara;

17 Kṣemya, Harikeśa, Sthāṇu, Puruṣa,
Harinetra, Muṇḍa, Kruddha, Uttaraṇa;

18 Bhāskara, Sutīrtha, Devadeva, Raṁhasa,
Uṣṇīsī, Suvaktra, Sahasrākṣa, Mīdhūṣa;

19 Giriśa, Praśānta, Yati, Cīravāsā,
Bilvadaṇḍa, Siddha, Sarvadaṇḍadhara;

20 Bhṛgavyādha, Mahān, Dhanvī, Bhava,
Vara, Somavaktra, Siddhamantra, Cakṣuṣa;

21 Hiraṇyabāhu, and, O rājā, Ugra, Lord of Directions,
Lelihān, Goṣṭha, Siddhamantra, Vṛṣṇi;

22 Lord of beasts, Lord of creatures – *namaḥ*!
Vṛṣva, Mātribhakta, Senānī, Madhyama;

23 Sruvahasta, Pati, Dhanvī, Bhārgava,
Aja, Kṛṣṇanetra, Virūpākṣa;

24 Tīkṣṇadaṁstra, Tīkṣṇa, Vaiśvānaramukha,
Mahādyuti, Anaṅga, Sarva, Lord of Phenomena;

25 Vilohita, Dīpta, Dīptākṣa, Mahaujā,
Vasuretā, Suvapuṣ, Pṛthu, Kṛttivāsa;

26 Kapālamāli, Suvarṇamukuṭa,
Mahādeva, Kṛṣṇa, Tryambaka, Anagha;

27 Krodhana, Anṛśaṁsa, Mṛdu, Bāhuśālī,
Daṇḍī, Tejatapa, Akrūrakarma,

28 Sahasraśirā, Sahasracaraṇa,
Svadhasvarūpa, Bahurūpa, Damṣṭrī – *namaḥ*!

29 Pinākin, Mahādeva, Mahāyogī, Avyaya,
Triśūlahasta, Varada, Tryambaka, Bhuvaneśvara;

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30 Tripuraghna, Trinayana, Trilokeśa, Mahaujas,
Prabhava, Sustainer of Creatures, Dharaṇidhara;

31 Iśāna, Śaṅkara, Sarva, Śiva, Viśveśvara, Bhava,
Umāpati, Paśupati, Viśvarūpa, Maheśvara;

32 Virūpākṣa, Daśabhuja, Divya-go-vṛṣabha-dhvaja,
Ugra, Sthāṇu, Śiva, Rudra, Śarva, Gaurīśa, Īśvara;

33 Śitikaṇṭha, Aja, Śukara, Pṛthu, Pṛthuhara, Vara,
Viśvarūpa, Virūpāksa, Bahurūpa, Umāpati;

34 Head bowed I praṇāma you – Devamanaṅgāṅgahara,
Hara,
I seek your grace and refuge, Mahādeva, Caturmukha!
Śaraṇyaṁ Śaraṇaṁ yāhi!

35 Namaskāra Mahādeva-Śiva,
and seek his benediction,
O lord of the earth!
After you have propitiated
the mahātmā deity,
the gold will be yours.

36 Such singleminded reverence
will transform a person
into a veritable Gaṇapati –
a hoard of gold is all too easy.
Go quickly. They will all be yours –
elephants, horses, camels, and more.

37 Take your followers with you,
to collect the gold."
Karandhama's son Marutta
did exactly as advised.

38 He namaskāra-ed Gaṅgādhara-Śiva
and obtained,
through Mahādeva-Śiva's grace,
a hoard of gold
to equal the wealth of Kubera.
After procuring the gold,
as instructed by Saṁvarta,
he planned an elaborate yajña.

39 The preparations were superhuman.
Artisans were ordered to design
to manufacture golden vessels
for the ritual sacrifice.

40 And when news reached Bṛhaspati
that lord-of-the-earth Marutta
was enjoying god-like prosperity,
he was deeply disturbed –

41 So much so that he grew pale.
Worriedly he reflected:
"My rival Samvarta is flourishing."
The though sickened him.

42 Devarāja Indra heard
of Bṛhaspati's agitation.
Accompanied by the gods,
he went to meet Bṛhaspati.

SECTION NINE

1 Indra asked:
"Do you sleep well, Bṛhaspati?
Are you pleased with your servants?
Do you please the gods?
– and tell me, O Brahmin,
do the gods favour you?"

2 "Devarāja," replied Bṛhaspati,
"I do sleep well,
I am pleased with my servants,
I always seek
the welfare of the gods,
and the gods favour me."

3 "Why is it then," asked Indra,
"that you look so pale
in mind and in body?
Who are the ones guilty
of causing this misery?
I will kill them all."

4 "O Maghavan!" replied Bṛhaspati.
"I have heard that Marutta
is planning a mahā-yajña
with Saṁvarta as his priest.
I do not want Saṁvarta
to preside at that yajña."

5 "Brahmin," said Indra,
"as the mantra-learned *purohita*
of the gods you have attained
all desires. Death and decay
are unable to harm you –
what can Saṁvarta do?"

6 "With the help of the gods,"
said Bṛhaspati to Indra,
"you rout the antigods
when you see them prospering.
What is more painful
than the rise of a rival?

7 O Devendra-Indra!
This is what ails me.
My rival prospers, I suffer.
Which is why, O Maghavan,
I want them subdued –
Saṁvarta and earth-lord Marutta."

8 Indra said to Agni:
"Proceed, Jātaveda,
with Brhaspati to Marutta.
Advise him that Bṛhaspati
will preside at his yajña
and make him immortal."

9 Agni said to Indra:
"I will go as your messenger,
O Maghavan-Indra,
present Bṛhaspati to Marutta,
and so honour your order,
and respect Bṛhaspati also."

10 The smoke-bannered deity
Dhūmaketu-Agni
proceeded (said Vyāsa)
incinerating the forests
like a roaring wind
at the end of winter.

11 "O muni!" said Marutta.
"How wonderful to see
the god of fire come in person!
Welcome him with a seat and water,
and offer him a cow,
and water to wash his feet."

12 "O faultless one!" said Agni.
"Seat, water, feet-washing
I gladly accept. I come here
as Indra's messenger, at his command."

13 "O smoke-bannered deity!
Dhūmaketu!" said Marutta.
"Is Śrīmān Devarāja pleased
with us and the gods –
are they loyal to him?
O divine one, tell us."

14 "O rājā!" said Agni.
"Śakra-Indra is more than pleased.
He wants timeless ties
with you and the loyal gods.
I bring, O Indra-among-rulers,
a message from him.

15 I have come to present
Bṛhaspati to Marutta.
O rājā! He is your guru.
Accept him as your priest.
Let him, through the yajña,
transform mortal to immortal."

16 "My yajña," said Marutta,
"will be done by Saṁvarta
the twice-born Brahmin.
I offer my *añjali*
respectfully to Bṛhaspati.
He is the priest
of Mahendra-Indra.
It does not become him
to officiate for mortals."

17 "If you appoint Bṛhaspati
your priest," said Agni,
"you will gain by the favour
of Devarāja-Indra
the paramount position
in his celestial mansion –
along with that fame
you will conquer also
the realm of heaven.

18 And if, O Indra-among-men,
you appoint Bṛhaspati priest,
you will conquer the human world
and the mahā Prajāpati-realms,
and all of Devarājya,
the realm of the gods."

19 "Pāvaka-Agni!" warned Saṁvarta.
"Understand me well –
Never bring Bṛhaspati
to Marutta again.
The wrath in my two eyes
will burn you to ashes."

20 Fearing incineration
and shaking like the leaves
of an *aśvattha* (said Vyāsa),
the smoke-bannered deity
returned to the gods.
Mahātmā Sakra-Indra
saw Havyavāhana-Agni
the oblation-carrier, arrive
with Bṛhaspati, and he said:

21 "O Jātaveda-Agni!
You went with Bṛhaspati
to Marutta, as I instructed.
That yajña-eager ruler –
what did he tell you?
did he heed my request?"

22 "He did not agree,"
replied Agni. "Indeed,
with hands folded in *añjali*,
despite my entreaties,
he said again and again,
'Saṁvarta is my priest.'

23 What is more, he added
that he spurned the world,
he spurned heaven
and the mahā Prajāpati-realms.
In no way would he accept
the request of Indra."

24 "Go back," said Indra,
"repeat my words to him,
words full of meaning.
Warn him if he refuses –
I shall strike him
with my thunderbolt."

25 "O Vāsava-Indra," said Agni,
"I fear for my safety.
Send the Gandharva-rājā.
Roused to fierce wrath,
brahmacarya-practising
Saṁvarta threatened me.

26 He said, O Śakra-Indra:
'If you dare to come,
again with Bṛhaspati,
I will burn you to ashes
with the power of the wrath
that flames in my two eyes."

27 "O Jātaveda-Agni,"
said Śakra-Indra,
"you are the all-consumer,
who can ever burn you?
All the world fears you.
What you say is unbelievable."

28 "Devendra," said Agni,
"O Śakra-Indra,
by the strength of your arms
you are the lord
of the earth and the sky
and heaven as well.
How was it possible then
for Vṛtra in the past
to seize power from you?"

29 "O Vahni-Agni," said Indra,
"I can rout my enemies,
I can squeeze a hill
to the size of an atom.
But I do not drink soma
that's offered by an enemy,
nor hurl my thunder on the weak.
Where is the mortal who dares
to face my enmity?

30 I have the power
to drag the Kālakeyas
from the sky to the earth.
I ejected Prahlāda from heaven.
Where is the mortal who dares
to face my enmity?"

31 "Mahendra," said Agni,
"remember the time
when Cyavana presided
at the yajña of Śaryāti?
Despite your objections,
ignoring your anger,
he and the Aśvins
boldly went ahead
and drank the soma.

32 O Puraṁdara-Indra!
That was when you wanted
to hurl your fierce thunder,
but by the power of his tapasyā
the Brahmin Cyavana
gripped your thunder-wielding arm,

33 And angrily materialised
a monster of an enemy,
an all-surrounding antigod,
a multi-formed *asura*,
seeing whom you immediately
closed your eyes.

34 That mahā-Dānava
had one jaw that touched
the earth, and the other
reached the limits of heaven,
and his thousands of sharp teeth
covered hundreds of *yojanas.*

35 Four massive teeth stood out,
like gleaming silver pillars,
two hundred *yojanas* tall.
Gritting his teeth,
that horrendous monster
pursued you murderously.

36 O Dānava-destroying Indra!
Everyone watched
the horrible monster.
What a spectacle!
You shaking with fear,
hands folded in *prāñjali*,
seeking the protection
of the mahā-ṛṣi
Cyavana!

37 O Śakra-Indra!
The power of Bṛahmins
excels the power of Kṣatriyas.
None is as powerful
as a Brahmin.
I know very well
what a Brahmin can do.
I have no desire
to quarrel with a Brahmin."

SECTION TEN

1 "You are right," said Indra.
"The power of Brahmins
is enormous certainly.
But I will not tolerate
the pride of Marutta.
My thunderbolt will humble him.

2 I order you, Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
to go to Marutta,
along with Saṁvarta.
Warn him: 'O rājā!
Accept Bṛhaspati as teacher,
or face my thunderbolt.' "

3 So Dhṛtarāṣṭra (continued Vyāsa)
proceeded to the court
of that Indra-among-men Marutta
with Vāsava-Indra's ultimatum:

4 "I am the gandharva Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
O Indra-among-men!
I bring from Indra
a message for you.
O tiger-brave rājā!
Listen to the words
of the mahātmā
lord-of-the-worlds
Lokādhipati.

5 Acintyakarmā-Indra
of inconceivable accomplishment
has this message for you:
'Appoint Bṛhaspati your priest.
If you refuse to do so,
beware my fearful thunderbolt.' "

6 "Puraṁdara-Indra," replied Marutta,
"you, the Viśvadevas,
the Vasus and Aśvins
all know what happens
to a friend-betrayer.
He commits a mahā-crime
like murdering a Brahmin –
from the consequences of which
there is no escape.

7 So I suggest, O rājā,
that Bṛhaspati remain
the priest of Mahendra,
the lord-god thunder-wielder,
and Saṁvarta accept
to perform my yajña.
I am not in agreement
with Indra's suggestion,
nor with what you say."

8 "O tiger-brave rājā!"
replied the gandharva.
"Can you not hear
the horrendous roaring
of Vāsava-Indra
shattering the sky?
Do you not fear
the fall of the thunderbolt
of Mahendra-Indra?
Take care, O rājā,
to think of your safety."
Now is the time."

9 Having listened to Dhṛtarāṣṭra
(said Vyāsa), and heard
Vāsava-Indra's roaring,
Marutta informed Saṁvarta,
a man of supreme tapasyā,
dedicated to dharma.

10 "O finest of Brahmins!"
said Marutta.
"Indra is not visible,
but the presence of the rain-cloud
suggests he is somewhere near.
O Indra-among-Brahmins!
I beg of you, save me!
Remove from my mind
this fear of Indra.

11 The thunderbolt-wielder
straddles the ten directions!
He is suprahuman!
He is gory and gruesome!
My yajña-assistants
are quaking with fear!"

12 "O lion-like rājā!"
said Saṁvarta.
"Do not fear Śakra-Indra.
With my *stambhinī*-learning
I will frustrate the gods.
Trust me!

13 Have no fear of Śakra-Indra, O king!
Trust my petrifying-learning!
I will nullify the weapons
used by the gods

14 Let thunderbolts in all directions
streak across the sky!
Let the rain-clouds
inundate the forests!
Let an occanic deluge
sweep across space!
Let lightning flash!
You need not fear.

15 Let Vāsava-Indra do
the worst to destroy you
with thunder and storm –
Vahni-Agni will save you
and grant the fulfilment
of your every desire."

16 "The reverberating thunder
and the roaring wind,"
said Marutta, "are fearful:
Again and again,
O Brahmin, I tremble,
I am desolated."

17 "O Indra-among-men!
You have nothing to fear,"
consoled Saṁvarta.
"Becoming the wind,
I will cancel the thunder
and dispel your fears.
All you have to do
is ask for a boon.
Ask, and it's yours."

18 "O Brahmin!" said Marutta.
"All I want is that Indra
come to this yajña
with all the gods,
and that he and the gods
personally accept
the juice of the soma
and the ritual oblations
offered to them."

19 "O rājā!" said Saṁvarta.
"By the power of my mantras
I have attracted Indra,
venerated by the gods,
to hurry to the yajña
in his celestial chariot."

20 Adored by the gods,
riding a chariot
pulled by excellent horses,
the rājā of the gods
drank the soma-juice offered
by Āvikṣit-Marutta.

21 Seeing Indra and the gods
approaching, Marutta
happily received them,
and welcomed the rājā
of the gods with pūjā
as ordained in the śāstras.

22 "O Puruhūta-Indra!
O multi-adored deity!"
exclaimed Saṁvarta.
"O Vidvan! Learned one!
O destroyer of Bala!
O vanquisher of Vṛtra!
By your presence today
is my yajña sanctified!
Be gracious, and drink
the soma-juice I offer."

23 "By your grace, Surendra,"
exclaimed Marutta,
"my life and my yajña
have found their fulfilment.
Bṛhaspati's younger brother
is performing my yajña."

24 "Bṛhaspati's younger brother,
your guru, I know,"
replied Indra.
"I come at his request.
He is rich in tapasyā,
his energy is limitless.
O Indra-among-men!
You have pleased me.
My anger is dispelled."

25 “Devarāja Indra,”
Saṁvarta said,
“be gracious and guide us.
O Surendra-Indra!
O divine one! Deva!
Attend to it personally,
and distribute the portions
so all the world knows
you are pleased with us.”

26 As asked by the son
of Aṅgiras, Marutta,
Śakra-Indra (said Vyāsa)
instructed the gods:
“Build a grand sabhā
with thousands of rooms –

27 A many-pillared edifice
with a splendid staircase
for gandharvas and apsarās,
where the apsārās will dance,
an edifice to rival
the grandeur of heaven.

28 O Indra-among-men!
Inspired by his words,
the celebrated gods
speedily constructed
the edifice as ordered
by Śakra-Indra.
Delighted by the pūjā,
O rājā, Indra
said to rājā Marutta:

29 “O rājā! O Indra-among-men!
I am here with you.
So, happily, are others:
your ancestors and the gods.
Pleased they are, O rājā,
with the oblations offered.

[XIV:10:30-35]

Transcreated by P. Lal

30 And now, O rājā, it is time
for the noble twice-born
to offer a red bull
at the altar of Agni,
and variegated gifts
to the Viśvadevas,
along with a blue bull
with a mottled skin,
blessed by the Brahmins.

31 How glorious, O rājā,
was that yajña in which
all the gods participated –
serving sanctified food,
and revered by Brahmins
in Devarāja's presence.

32 Next, mahātmā Saṁvarta,
like a second incandescent
Vahni-Agni himself,
invoked the gods joyfully
and chanted the mantras
before the sacred fire.

33 After Bala-slayer Indra
drank the soma-juice,
followed by the gods,
with the earth-lord's permission
the yajña concluded,
they went away gratified.

34 The foe-destroying rājā
happily distributed
large sums of gold
to the twice-born Brahmins
and shone in splendour
like Vitteśa-Kubera.

35 Filling his treasury
with the leftover wealth,
Marutta happily
took his guru's permission
and returned to rule
his sea-surrounded kingdom.

36 What a guṇa-laden rājā
was Marutta whose yajña
amassed so much gold!
O Indra-among-men! Do the same.
Get the gold, perform the yajña,
and gratify the gods.

37 The advice of the son
of Satyavati delighted
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
(continued Vaiśampāyana).
With a plan in his mind
to perform the yajña
with the gold as advised,
he consulted his ministers
again and again.

SECTION ELEVEN

1 After wonder-working Vyāsa
said this to the king
(continued Vaiśampāyana).
mahā-energetic Vāsudeva-Krishna added,

2 Realising how distressed the king was,
mourning the deaths
of his relatives and friends,
all killed in battle,
looking like an eclipsed sun
or a smoke-shrouded fire –

3 Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
on the verge of mental collapse –
the Vṛṣṇis-clan-glory-enhancer added
the following words
to console the grief
of Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira:

4 "All crookedness leads to death,
simplicity leads to Brahman.
This is the essence of all wisdom.
The rest is idle babble.

5 Your karma remains undone,
your enemies remain unvanquished.
Why do you refuse to see the enemies
that lurk inside your own body?

6 Let me tell you the ancient story
of the Indra-Vṛtra battle,
as an example of dharma,
exactly as I heard it.

7 O master of mankind!
When the earth in the past
was overpowered by Vṛtra,
and all the earth's fragrances

8 Transformed into stinking odours,
Śatakratu-Indra
of a hundred sacrifices
was infuriated.

9 So incensed was he that he flung
his thunderbolt at Vṛtra.
Wounded by the thunderbolt,
illimitably powerful Vṛtra

10 Fled to the safety of the ocean,
thereby polluting
the rasa-liquidity-and-purity
of the waters.

11 This incensed Śatakratu-Indra further,
and again he hurled his thunder.
Absorbing the impact
of that incredibly violent bolt,

12 Vṛtra penetrated the missile
and assimilated its energy.
Its matter and form and energy
appropriated by Vṛtra,

13 Śatakratu-Indra with fresh wrath
struck Vṛtra with another *vajra*-bolt.
Assailed again
by the incredibly violent missile,

14 Vṛtra absorbed
its *vāyu*-gases.
Its *vāyu*-gases appropriated
by Vṛtra,

15 An even more incensed Śatakratu
hurled another thunderbolt.
Assailed by the power
of that limitlessly violent bolt,

16 Vṛtra sought refuge
in *ākāśa*-ether,
and appropriated the *śabda*,
the sound-essence of *ākāśa*.

17 Incensed even further,
Śatakratu released another bolt.
Struck by the power
of that limitlessly violent bolt,

18 Vṛtra penetrated
and appropriated Śakra-Indra himself.
Appropriation by Vṛtra plunged Indra
in a state of mahā-delusion.

19 *Tāta*! Dear one!
That was when Vasiṣṭha
inspired him with *rathantara*,
the wisdom of the body's-inner-self.
O bull-brave Bharata!
I have heard that Śatakratu-Indra
then slew the Vṛtra in his body
with an invisible thunderbolt.

20 O master of mankind!
This mystery of dharma
was recited by Śakra-Indra
to the mahā-ṛṣis.
I now give it to you
to learn its full meaning."

[XIV:12:1-7]

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SECTION TWELVE

1 Diseases are of two kinds
(explained Vāsudeva-Krishna):
of the body and of the mind.
Each influences the other.

2 Disease of the body
is known as the physical;
disease of the mind
as the psychological.

3 The body's guṇas, O rājā,
are cold, heat, and wind.
When perfectly balanced,
they promote good health.

4 Cold drives out heat,
and heat drives out cold.
The guṇas of the ātman
are sattva, rajas and tamas.

5 When these guṇas are balanced,
spiritual health follows.
Remedies are recommended
in case of imbalance.

6 Happiness drives out sorrow,
and sorrow drives out happiness.
Some afflicted by sorrow
yearn for past happiness;
others enjoying happiness
recall past sorrows.

7 But you, son of Kuntī,
you recall neither your sorrows
nor your happiness.
You are uselessly paralysed.

8 Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
It must be your nature then
that makes you so helpless.
You saw Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī
dragged, in her period, in the sabhā.
The Pāṇḍavas saw it too.
Yet you do not want
to recall that event.

9 You have no desire to recall
your expulsion from the city,
and your exile in the mahā-forest,
clad in antelope-skin.

10 You do not wish to recall
your humiliation with the antigod Jaṭa,
your skirmish with Citrasena,
your encounter with Saindhava-Jayadratha.

11 Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
You find it convenient to forget
that Kīcaka kicked Yājñasenī-Draupadī,
during your exile in disguise.

12 O foe-exterminator!
The battle with Droṇa and Bhīṣma
is over – the lonely battle now
is your battle with yourself.

13 O bull-brave Bharata!
Prepare yourself for that battle.
Grasp the glory of your secret spirit
and perform your sva-karma!

14 No arrows will help you here,
no servants, no relatives.
You alone can help yourself.
You cannot escape the crisis.

15 If you fail this battle,
you are doomed.
Son of Kuntī! Understand this.
You must fight, and you must win.

16 Use your intelligence and realise:
all creatures have to face this.
Respect the tradition of your ancestors
and rule the kingdom accordingly.

SECTION THIRTEEN

1 O Bharata descendant!
(continued Vāsudeva-Krishna):
You do not become perfect
by renouncing external comforts.
You become perfect – or you may not –
by giving up physical desires.

2 Let our enemies delight
in the dharma and pleasure
they find in renouncing
external comforts,
but remain trapped
in their physical desires.

3 Two syllables – *mama* (mine) –
constitute Mṛtyu-Mortality.
Three syllables – *na mama* (not mine) –
constitute Brahman-Eternity.

4 O rājā! These two –
Brahman-Eternity and Mṛtyu-Mortality –
invisibly present
in the ātman of all creatures –
are locked in a perpetual battle
for supremacy.

5 If the *sattva*-spirit is indestructible,
O Bharata descendant,
then even violence done to the body
falls within the context of ahiṁsā.

6 How will it profit a man
to gain this creature-filled earth
if worldly pleasures distress him?
Of what use is it to him?

7 And, O Pārtha-Yudhiṣṭhira,
does he not relish
the taste of death in his mouth –
the man who escapes
to a life in the forest
but yearns for worldly pleasures?

8 Be vigilant, O Bharata,
about your enemies –
outside you, and inside you.
See the world as it is,
and not as it seems to be,
and be free of mahā-fear.

9 Never praised is the man
who pursues his kāma-desires.
The root of karma is kāma.
Desires sprout from the mind.
Wise are the paṇḍits
who discipline their minds.

10 Dedicated to the discipline
of *abhyāsa*-yoga,
birth after birth,
a yogi proceeds
on the essential path
known as *sāra-mārga.*
Charity and tapasyā,
study of the Vedas,
Veda-ordained karma,

11 Vows and yajñas,
time-honoured practices,
Dhyāna-yoga –
if a person rejects these,
and performs karma
motivated by selfish kāma,
he transgresses dharma.
Kāma-control is dharma,
whose root is self-discipline.

12 In this connection, Yudhiṣṭhira,
the sages of the past
chant a *gāthā*-song
called the kāma-gītā.
Listen to it carefully.
This is what Kāma says:
"No one can kill me
unless he adopts
the approved means.

13 Should a man try to kill me
with brute strength, I elude him.
Becoming his *abhimān*-ego,
I delude him.

14 Should a man try to kill me
with yajñas and sacrifices,
I take birth in his mind
as a monster of vices
posing, as it were, as a mahātmā –
and similar devices.

15 Should a man try to kill me
with the Vedas and Vedic recitations,
I stupefy him by posing to be stable
in a world of unstable creations.

16 Should a man who is radiant-in-truth
try to kill me with patience,
I confuse his mind utterly
and fill it with negations.

17 If a man of firm vows
uses tapasyā to kill me,
I appears to him as tapasyā
and sully his purity.

18 Should a paṇḍit try to kill me,
using mokṣa as his tool,
I tie him to his desire
for salvation, the fool!
I dance, and I laugh!
When all is said and done,
creatures come and go,
I am the only Eternal One."

19 Which is why, mahārāja,
you should channelise your kāma
into beneficial yajña-*dakṣiṇās,*
and make this your dharma.

20 Start preparing for the Aśvamedha
as ordained by tradition,
along with other ritual sacrifices
with lavish *dakṣiṇā*-gifts.

21 What is the point lamenting
over and over again
those who have perished in battle?
You cannot revive them.

22 So plan on performing mahā-yajñas
with munificent *dakṣiṇās.*
That will get you fame in this world
and the supreme goal in the next.

SECTION FOURTEEN

1 With multi-faceted words of wisdom
(continued Vaiśampāyana):
the rich-in-tapasyā munis consoled
the rāja-ṛṣi Yudhiṣṭhira
grieving the loss of his friends
and family members.

2 Similarly, Bhagavān Krishna personally –
universally-famed Viṣṭaśrava-Krshna –
Dvaipāyana-Kṛṣṇa-Vyāsa,
Devasthana – all respect-deserving –

3 And, O earth-lord Janamejaya,
Nārada, Bhīma, Nakula,
Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī, Sahadeva,
percipient Vijaya-Arjuna,

4 And many other tiger-brave heroes,
and Brahmins learned in the śāstras
relieved the grief-born depression
of Yudhiṣṭhira.

5 Venerating the gods
and honouring Brahmins,
king Yudhiṣṭhira performed
the *preta*-karma family death-rites,

6 The dharmātmā devoted himself
to ruling the sea-surrounded earth.
With a serene conscience
assuming control of his kingdom,
the Kaurava king Yudhiṣṭhira said
to Vyā sa, Nā rada, and others present:

7 "O bull-brave munis!
O finest of elderly sages!
Your words have consoled me.
I have no misgiving any more.

8 And what a hoard of wealth
is now in my hands
to gratify the gods with!
It is time now,
with your blessings and help,
to commence the ritual.

9 O finest of the twice-born!
Revered Pitāmahas!
It is time we journeyed
to the Himavant mountains,
which I have heard
is a region of scenic wonders.

10 What a variety of excellent advice
I have plentifully received
from such revered deva-ṛṣis
as Nārada and Devasthāna!

11 I must be fortune-favoured indeed
to receive in my distress
such inspiring encouragement
form gurus of your stature."

12 Pleased by the gratitude
of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
the mahā-ṛṣis blessed the rājā
and Phālguna-Arjuna,

13 Recommending their journey;
then suddenly they disappeared.
Dharma's son, *prabhu*-lord Yudhiṣṭhira,
after they left, sat down.

14 For some time,
the Pāṇḍavas were involved
in performing the death-ṛites
of Bhīṣma.

15 O finest of the Kauravas!
Distributing mahā-gifts to Brahmins,
they performed the *aurdha-dehika* rites
for Bhīṣma, Karṇa and other Kauravas,

16 With the help of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
The *aurdha-dehika* rites completed,
the bull-brave Pāṇḍavas again
gifted lavish wealth to Brahmins,

17 After which, Yudhiṣṭhira,
placing Dhṛtarāṣṭra as leader,
entered the Elephant City Hastināpura.
Consoling his *pitā*-uncle
īśvara-lord Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira,
with his brothers,
began ruling his kingdom.

18 Like ideal Mahārāja Manu
and Daśaratha's son Rāma,
the lion-brave Bharata Yudhiṣṭhira
ruled his kingdom.

19 No adharma during his rule,
all his subjects abided by dharma.
O tiger-brave Janamejaya!
It was like the Kṛta-yuga repeated.

20 Nṛpa-nandana Yudhiṣṭhira
saw Kali-yuga approaching
and received him with dignity;
with help from his brothers,
inspired by the power of dharma,
Yudhiṣṭhira governed wisely.

21 The god of rain blessed
the land with timely showers.
No disease afflicted anyone,
no one went hungry.

22 No ailments of the mind,
no illwill among the subjects.
Brahmins and other castes
practised their sva-dharma.

23 The test of dharma was truth,
and truth was the cherished ideal.
Ensconced in the seat of dharma,
Yudhiṣṭhira devoted himself
to the welfare of the good and honest,
women, children, disadvantaged and elders.

24 All the *varṇāśrama* caste members
helped and protected each other,
providing livelihood to the unemployed,
and wealth to yajña-performers.

25 To the happiness of this world
was added fearlessness of the next.
During his governance,
earth was transformed into heaven –
indeed, the joys of the earth
exceeded celestial bliss.

26 All women *pati-vrata* husband-vowed,
lovely, gracefully ornamented –
ladies of character, delighting their homes
with their wealth of guṇa-virtues.

27 The men meritorious and dignified,
all dedicated to dharma –
and consequently happy,
untouched by any taint.

28 All men and women
always sweet-speaking,
never crooked, assiduously pure,
unaffected by lassitude.

29 All the people adorned with earrings,
necklaces, bracelets and waistbands;
all beautifully dressed,
perfumed and scented.

30 All Brahmins well-versed
in Brahma-vidyā dedication;
not one with wrinkles or white hari;
all of them long-lived.

31 No man lusted, mahārāja,
for another's wife,
no castes intermarried,
all respected traditional ideals.

32 O Indra-among-rājās!
During the reign of Yudhiṣṭhira
serpents and scorpions
and other fierce animals
neither attacked each other
nor harmed other species.

33 Sweet-faced, graceful-tailed
and handsome-uddered cows
gave a plentitude of milk.
Their owners never beat them,
and their calves
were born healthy.

34 No one wasted time.
The *puruṣārthas* were practised:
dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa.
What was forbidden by the śāstras
was avoided and rejected,
the Vedas were carefully studied.

35 Healthy, sturdy, docile bullocks
were everyone's delight.
Sweet sounds everywhere,
everywhere tactile pleasures,
delicious the rasas,
enchanting the scenery,
mind-ravishing
the fragrances.

[XIV:14:36-43]

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36 Yoked to dharma, artha and kāma
were the minds of the people;
their sādhanā concentrated on mokṣa,
on pure joy and piety.

37 Trees flowering and fruiting,
pleasing to the touch.
pollution-free, lovely-leafed,
shady-boughed, plenty-seeded.

38 Thought and deed went hand in hand.
None felt depressed.
The integrity of rāja-ṛṣi Yudhiṣṭhira
set the example for everyone.

39 The Pāṇḍavas, dedicated to dharma
and graced with all auspicious marks,
were devoted to the eldest brother,
the cynosure of their affection.

40 They were all broad-shouldered like a lion,
all had conquered anger,
all had knee-length arms,
all were generous and disciplined.

41 During the Pāṇḍava reign,
the self-guṇa-following seasons
obeyed their natural rhythms,
and the hosts of stars
wheeled in the constellations
for the happiness of mankind.

42 Agriculture flourished,
along with gems and guṇas,
like the cow-of-plenty Kāmadhenu
the full fruit-fulfiller.

43 None transgressed the tradition
laid down by Manu and others.
All the rājās continued
their noble family heritage.
All of them desired the welfare
of Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

44 Who, steeped in dharma,
enhanced mahā family-glory,
ruling the earth, on the principles
recommended by Manu.

45 *Tatā*! Dear one!
Dharma tested a rājā's character,
and the rājā's character
shaped the people's future.

46 Like Surendra-Indra ruling heaven,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
supported by Viṣṇu-Krishna
and Arjuna
the Gāṇḍīva-bow-wielder,
ruled the earth.

SECTION FIFTEEN

1 "O finest of the twice-born!"
said Janamejaya.
"After the Pāṇḍavas conquered
and restored peace to their kingdom,
what did valiant Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna do?"

2 O lord of the world!
(replied Vaiśampāyana)
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
were delighted
with the conquest of the kingdom
and the restoration of peace.

3 Like the lord-of-the-gods
Deveśvara-Indra
sporting with his consort in heaven,
they passed their days
roaming happily in forests
and enchanting mountains.

[XIV:15:4-11]

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4 They joyfully proceeded
on meritorious *tīrtha*-pilgrimages,
visiting lakes and rivers,
like the twin Aśvin deities.

5 O Bharata descendant!
Returning to Indraprastha,
mahātmā Krishna and Pāṇḍava Arjuna
were overjoyed.

6 They passed their days, O earth-lord,
recalling the vivid events of the war
and the trials and tribulations
they had to endure.

7 The two supreme ancient ṛṣis,
Arjuna and mahātmā Krishna,
delightedly narated the histories
of the gods and ṛṣis.

8 Profoundly percipient in artha,
Keśava-Krishna
spoke sweetly and memorably
to Pārtha-Arjuna.

9 Janārdana-Krishna consoled Pārtha-Arjuna
still mourning his son's death
and the loss of thousands
of other relatives.

10 Vastly learned in *vijñāna*
and master of mahā-tapasyā,
Sātvata-Krishna consoled Arjuna,
and having done so,
he relaxed, as if relieved
of a heavy burden.

11 Sweet and eminently reasonable
were the words
with which Govinda-Krishna
comforted Guḍākeśa-Arjuna.

12 "O foe-crushing ambidexterous one!"
said Vāsudeva-Krishna.
"The might of your arms
has enabled Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
to extend his authority
over the entire earth.

13 O finest-of-men Narottama!
With the help of Bhīma and the twins
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
is now lord of the world.

14 You who are wise in dharma!
It was with dharma
that he made the kingdom thorn-free.
It was by dharma
that he succeeded in killing
rājā Suyodhana-Duryodhana.

15 The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
delighted in adharma,
in greed and bitter speech;
they were wicked-ātmaned.
That is why they and their followers
were wiped out.

16 O glory-of-the-Kaurava-race!
Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
It is with your help
that Dharma's son
lord-of-the-earth Yudhiṣṭhira
has made peace prevail.

17 O enemy-exterminating Pāṇḍava!
To be with you
is to find joy
even in a desolate forest.
And now, with you in a city,
with my aunt Pṛthā as well!

18 My happiness is complete
where Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira is,
where mahā-powerful Bhīma is,
where Mādrī's twin sons are.

19 O Kaurava descendant!
O defectless one!
In this heaven-like sabhā,
enchanting and merit-giving, with you

20 I have spent much time,
and never got a chance
to meet Śūra's son Vasudeva,
Baladeva-Barārama,
and, O Kaurava,
the other bull-brave Vṛṣṇis –

21 Which is why I have decided
to go to Dvāravatī today.
O bull-brave one!
Give me leave to go.

22 Varioulsy have I and Bhīṣma
given wise advice
to rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
on how to overcome sorrow.

23 Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira is our sovereign,
and deeply learned –
yet that supreme mahātmā
listened attentively to us.

24 Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
is wise in dharma,
he knows the meaning of gratitude,
he speaks the truth.
Truth, dharma and idealism
make him morally strong.

25 I want you now, Arjuna,
if it pleases you,
to go to that lord of men
and inform him
that I have decided
to go to Dvārakā.

26 O mahā-muscled one!
I will give up my *prāṇa*-life
rather than hurt him
by leaving for Dvāravatī.

27 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
O Kaurava-descendant!
Let me say this frankly –
I speak the truth when I say
I did everything for your good.
I am not lying.

28 I serve no useful purpose, Arjuna,
by staying on here.
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son, his warriors, his followers –
are all dead.

29 *Tāta*! Dear one!
Under the authority
of Dharma's son, wise Yudhiṣṭhira,
is this vast earth
with her oceans and mountains,
with her gardens,

30 With her wealth of gems –
all his : the Pāṇḍava Kuru-rājā.
That wise-in-dharma rājā
rules this earth with dharma.

31 Long may he govern
the way he does!
O bull-brave Bharata!
May he receive the praise
of mahātmā Siddhas
and *vandi*-benedictions!

32 O enhancer of Kaurava glory!
Come with me to the rājā,
the lion-brave Kaurava,
and let us ask his permission
to grant me leave
to go to Dvārakā.

33 My body, my wealth,
my house, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
are always at the disposal
of the Kuru-lord Yudhiṣṭhira,
the mahā-minded ruler
I love and respect deeply.

[XIV:15:34-35; 16:1-4]

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34 O Nṛpātmaja prince!
Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
Since you and noble-charactered
guru Yudhiṣṭhira
have the kingdom so firm
and safe in your hands,
what need is there
for me to be here
except to be with you?"

35 O Pārthiva earth-lord!
Janārdana-Krishna
said this to valiant Arjuna,
who listened sadly
and with pūjā-respect
replied: "Whatever you say."

SECTION SIXTEEN

1 "O twice-born one!" said Janamejaya.
"what did they discuss in the sabhā –
mahātmā Krishna and Arjuna –
after exterminating their enemies?"

2 In that heavenly sabhā,
after recovering his kingdom,
Pārtha-Arjuna passed his time
doing little else
except joyfully appreciating
the company of Krishna.

3 One day, it so happened, O king,
they were relaxing
in a truly celestial part of the sabhā
when their relatives surprised them.

4 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
was enchanted to be with Krishna.
Gazing at the glorious sabhā,
he said to Krishna:

5 "O mahā-muscled one!
Son of Devakī!
I experienced your greatness
on the eve of the battle
when I saw your *rūpamīśvaram*
celestial self-revelation.

6 But what you said to me then,
O Bhagavān Keśava,
so lovingly, I have forgotten,
O tiger-among-men,
unable with my fickle concentration
to grasp your meaning.

7 But I have never stopped
being curious about what you said.
And now, O Mādhava-Krishna,
you are going back to Dvārakā."

8 Finest-of-speakers mahā-energetic Krishna
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
embraced Phālguna-Arjuna
and replied to him:

9 "Pārthā-Arjuna!
Profoundly mysterious
was the wisdom I gave you –
the true form of dharma
and the nature of the realms
that are called eternal.

10 I am mahā-displeased by your silliness
in not understanding what I said.
It is not possible for me
to repeat all that I then said.

11 Really, son of Pāṇḍu,
you seem to lack *śraddhā*
and power of comprehension.
O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
I cannot now repeat
what I said then.

12 That dharma was the perfect all in all
of Brahma-realisation.
It is impossible to do
a duplicate presentation of it.

13 Yoked-in-yoga then
I discoursed on Brahma-realisation.
Now let me recite to you
a very ancient historical story.

14 Listen to it with a steady mind
and you will reach the supreme goal.
O finest of dharma-knowers!
Listen carefully.

15 It so happened once,
O foe-chastiser,
a radiant Brahmin visited us
all the way from heaven,
from Brahmā-loka.
We pūjā-respected him.

16 O bull-brave Bharata Pārtha-Arjuna!
I asked him a question.
His reply was simply divine.
Listen to it attentively.

17 *Vibho*! Radiant Krishna!
(said the Brahmin)
The question you have posed,
out of your compassion for all creatures,
regarding mokṣa-dharma,
the dharma that destroys delusion –

18 That I will now answer,
O Madhusūdana-Krishna.
O Mādhava-Krishna,
listen to me attentively.

19 There was a Brahmin called Kāśyapa,
yoked-to-tapasyā
and unequalled in dedication to dharma
He happened to meet
a fellow-Brahmin who knew all
the ins and outs of dharma,

20 Who knew, in fact, everything
about the appearance and disappearance
of things of *jñāna* and *vijñāna*,
spiritual and scientific,
and he was skilled in practical matters
of *loka-tattva-artha*,
and he was very erudite also
in the mystery of pain and pleasure.

21 He knew all about birth and death,
about *puṇya*-merit and demerit;
he know what high and low goals
are attained by high and low humans.

22 He wandered like a liberated soul,
perfected, serene, his senses controlled;
he blazed with Brahma-brilliance,
he went wherever he willed.

23 Indeed, he could vanish at will,
he roamed in the company
of invisible *cakradhara* Siddha ascetics,
discussing truths. Kāśyapa heard of him –

24 Flowing like the wind he was,
everywhere-going, nowhere attached,
preferring to be alone with the Siddhas,
doing exactly as he liked –
and Kāśyapa decided to meet
this illuminated sage.

25 Marvellously learned himself,
dedicated to tapasyā,
and deeply desiring dharma,
finest-of-the-twice-born Kāśyapa,

26 Stupefied by his maha-brilliance,
Kāśyapa revered him as a guru,
attending as ordained by tradition
to that incomparable twice-born's every need.

27 O foe-exterminator!
With unceasing guru-devotion
Kāśyapa gratified that leained-in-*śruti*
and morally immaculate Brahmin.

28 So pleased was the Brahmin that,
keeping the highest ideal in mind,
one day he advised his disciple.
Listen, Janārdana-Krishna, to what he said.

29 The perfected Siddha said:
"*Tāta*! Dear one!
It's the yoga of meritorious deeds
and other varied karma
that makes human beings achieve goals
in this world and in heaven.

30 Eternal happiness is nowhere,
no achievement is eternal.
No matter how high you reach
after painful struggle,
your will fall from that mahā-success
again and again.

31 Gripped by kāma and anger,
deluded by greed,
I wallowed in misdeeds,
I became ill-starred, I suffered.

32 Again and again I died,
again and again I was reborn.
I was an omnivorous glutton,
I sucked at many breasts.

33 Many mothers I saw, many fathers,
O faultless one!
Many were my joys,
many my sorrows.

34 I have mingled with the delightful
and with the disgusting.
The wealth I gained with much labour –
I had to endure its loss.

35 And insults from rājā and relatives –
I bore them all patiently.
Body-pain and mind-pain –
I know what they are.

36 Horrible humiliation has been mine,
and prison, and death.
I have descended into hell,
and agonised in the realm of Yama.

37 Decay and disease and disaster –
I have known them all.
The misery that springs
from the play of opposites –
the misery of life's ambivalence
I have experienced.

38 At the end of it all, one day,
drowning in despair
and stricken by sorrow,
I rejected the whirling world
and sought refuge
in the *nīrākāra* formless Divinity.

39 This was the path I chose
to make my way in this world,
and so by the grace of my ātman
I found the perfection I sought.

40 I shall not be born again –
no, never more!
For as long as this world lasts,
I shall be free,
and working for the welfare of others
I will find my own fulfilment.

41 O finest of the twice-born!
This will be my supreme fulfilment.
This is how, transcending this world,
I will attain the Transcendent Divine –

42 Brahman – the Unmanifested One.
Of that I am certain.
No more for me this world of mortality,
O foe-exterminator!

43 O mahā-wise one!
You have pleased me.
What would you like from me?
This is the right time
to receive from me
what you desire from me.

44 I know why you have come to me.
I will soon leave this world.
That is why I am asking you
to ask me what you want.

45 I am impressed by your percipience.
You have pleased me.
Ask for what is good for you.
I will clarify everything.

46 I respect your intelligence, Kāśyapa,
for it is your intelligence
that made you recognise me.
You are gifted with insight."

SECTION SEVENTEEN

1 Some very difficult questions regarding dharma
(continued Vāsudeva-Krishna)
were posed to the Brahmin.
After touching his feet,
that finest-of-dharma-knowers
Kāśyapa asked:

2 "How does the body dematerialise,
how is another body acquired?
How does one escape
the repeated painful rounds
of *saṁsara* birth-and-rebirth?

3 How does the ātman shake off
the prakṛti-fabricated body?
How does the freed body
enter another?

4 How does a human being enjoy
the fruits of good and bad karma?
What happens to one's karma
when one's body is no more?"

5 O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna!
Pressed by Kāśyapa,
the Siddha Brahmin answered
each question one by one.
I will repeat to you
what he said.

6 Age-prolonging and fame-gaining karma
is what fabricates the body.
The body is acquired,
and the body starts decaying,

7 And the embodied human being
urges his ātman to perform acts
that harm his spiritual well-being.
Impending doom speeds up his self-delusion.

8 Violating his ātman's integrity,
even when aware of the benefits
of sattva-selfhood, physical health
and kāla-correct routine,
he starts indulging in irregular
and indiscriminate food habits.

9 He allows himself to become the victim
of self-destructive practices –
at times he gorges on food,
and at times he starves himself.

10 Bad vegetables, bad meat, bad drinks,
polluted ingredients,
rich wining and dining,
indigestion, constipation, conspicuous consumption . . .

11 Excessive physical exercise,
uncontrolled sexual indulgence,
over-activity so stressful
he delays urinating and defecating.

12 Rasa-oily untimely meals,
and sleeping during daytime –
he becomes the victim of the excesses
of his own undigested food.

13 It's this abuse of his body
that leads to disease and death –
or what 's worse,
he may even hang himself.

14 These are the causes
of the decay of the body.
Understand correctly what I say
about the life of the body.

15 Fierce *vāyu*-wind in the body
produces *uṣmā*-heat
which sweeps through the vital parts,
damaging the *prāṇa*-life-breath.

16 Understand this well:
this surging body-heat
penetrates every vital part
of the living body.

17 The *jīva*-spirit in the body
agonises;
unable to endure the pain,
it leaves the body forever.

18 O finest of the twice-born!
Know well this truth:
the ātman will not endure pain,
it leaves the body.
All creatures are subject
to this cycle of birth and death.

19 O bull-brave twice-born!
It's clear for everyone to see
that creatures discard their bodies.
The pain of entering the womb
and the pain experienced
emerging from the womb

20 Are like the pain experienced
by a man discarding his body
when the joints start falling apart.
Distressful is the womb-fluid.

21 Impacted by another fierce wind,
the body's wind-energy
which consists of the five elements
separates into the five elements –

22 The wind that energises
the *prāṇa*-and-*apāna* life-breaths –
and shoots up,
painfully discarding the body.

23 This is the way it leaves the body,
making it breathless,
bereft of heat, of breath,
of *śrī*-beauty, of consciousness.

24 Bereft of Brahma-breath,
that person is said to be dead.
The channels of the senses
of the owner of the body are closed;

25 He can no longer experience
the *prāṇa*-life that subsists on food.
It is the eternal *jīva*-spirit
that stimulates all activity.

26 The body's vital *marma*-parts are those
where the elements unite
in what is for the time being stable.
This is what the śāstras say.

27 When the *marma*-parts disunite,
the wind-energy rushes upwards
and, entering the person's heart,
overpowers his *sattva*-self-ness.

28 The person remains conscious,
but is not self-conscious
The primal principle of tamas-darkness
clouds his vital *marma*-energy.
The *mātariśvan* wind dominates,
the *jīva*-spirit is suppressed.

29 With frantic mahā-breathing,
the jīva-spirit struggles to escape,
and the intensity of its efforts
makes the body shudder spasmodically.

30 Free at last!
Freed from the body
the *jīva*-spirit is surrounded
on all sides inexorably
by its good and bad karma.

31 Brahma-knowers steeped in knowledge
and versed in the truths of *śrutis*
can make out the signs of good karma
and the signs of bad karma.

32 Men with *jñāna-cakṣu* eyes-of-wisdom
see flickering *udyota*-light clearly
even in the thickest darkness,
like a glow-worm scattering gloom,

33 So the perfected Siddhas
see with divine insight
the *jīva*-spirit experiencing birth, death,
and life in the yoni-womb.

34 According to the śāstras,
jīva is assigned three realms.
The realm of living creatures
is karma-bhūmi, the field of action.

35 This is the field
where all embodied creatures
must accept the consequences
of their good and bad deeds.

36 As a result of their bad karma
they enter the realm called Niraya,
the state of non-happiness.
This is man's painful fall,
a state in which he is cooked,
a state hard to escape,
a state to escape from which
every effort should be directed.

37 Let me describe the third realm,
the uplifting region
attainable by human beings.
Listen to me attentively,

38 For if you do so,
your karma will be fulfilled,
and your intelligence made stable.
Where The stars shine,
the region illuminated
by the moon-maṇḍala,

39 Where the sun-maṇḍala
shines in self-spledour –
that is the region
of the performers of *puṇya*-karma.

40 And when their good karma is exhausted,
they are reborn,
again and again are they reborn.
You should realise
heaven has three divisions:
superior, inferior, and middling.

41 There is envy in heaven too
at the *śrī*-prosperity of others.
I have given you in detail
the goals attainable by human beings.

42 I will now describe how the *jīva*
resides in the womb.
O twice-born one!
Listen to me carefully.

SECTION EIGHTEEN

1 Whatever good or bad acts are done
(continued the Brahmin)
can never be destroyed.
They will bear fruit,
one after the other,
in one field after another.

2 Like a fruiting tree
providing plentiful fruit,
the deeds of a pure heart
bring a wealth of *puṇya*-merit.

3 The deeds of a corrupted heart
lead to more corruption.
The ātman employs the heart
for the performance of karma.

4 Understand how a person,
trapped in kāma and anger,
hemmed in by his karma,
enters a womb.

5 Semen mixes with blood
and enters the female womb,
becoming from then on the field
of good and bad karma.

6 Subtle and *avyakta* - unphysical,
the *jīva*-spirit remains unattached
and unaffected by kāma,
because it is really Eternal Brahman.

7 It is the seed of all life.
Life lives because it is.
The *jīva*-spirit permeates
all the parts of the foetus,

8 Gifting mind-awareness
and *prāṇa*-life-breath.
The foetus, now mind-aware,
stirs its limbs.

9 Like molten iron assuming
the form of the receiving mould,
the *jīva*-spirit enters the foetus.
Understand this well.

10 Like fire permeating a mass of iron
and hugely heating it,
the *jīva*-spirit infuses itself in the foetus.
Understand this well.

11 Like a lamp in a room
lights up everything around it,
mind-awareness lights up
the entire body.

12 There is no escape:
the consequences of karma,
whether good or bad,
are enjoyed or endured.

13 So past deeds get exhausted,
and new deeds accumulate,
until such time as dharma
leads to mokṣa-yoga.

14 O finest of men!
Let me discourse on the karma
with whose help the *jīva*,
journeying from-one yoni
into another and yet another,
succeeds in finding happiness.

15 Gifts, vows, brahmacarya,
Veda-study as ordained by tradition,
self-control, serenity,
compassion for all creatures;

16 Discipline, avoidance of cruelty,
not coveting others' property,
refraining from even mentally doing ill,
and not wishing harm to the world's life;

17 Devotedly serving one's mother and father
at their every beck and call,
pūjā-respecting gods, guests and gurus,
ghrṇā-sympathy, purity, sense-restraint –

18 And all other good karma –
this is the wealth of good people
This dharma is the eternal safeguard
of all people.

19 Such is the behaviour
of people of good character.
Only people with serene minds
can practise true dharma.

20 Theirs is the karma
of Sanātana Dharma.
He who is stable in dharma
never experiences grief.

21 That is why dharma-violators
need to be restrained.
It is the liberated yogi
who excels everyone.

22 Ferried across the whirlpool
of the world's *saṁsāra*,
slowly but surely,
is he who abider by dharma.

23 Every creature must taste
the fruits of past karma.
We are what we are, imperfect,
as a consequence of our karma.

24 How did *jīva*-spirit
accept for itself the body?
This is a worrisome question
that puzzles people.

25 Sarva-loka-Pitāmaha
grancestor-of-the-cosmos Brahmā
created a body for himself first,
after which he created
the moving and unmoving multitudes
of the three worlds.

26 He created Pradhāna,
the prakṛti-nature of all matter,
the warp and woof of the universe,
so highly regarded by all.

27 This decays and gets destroyed,
that is indestructible.
This is *kṣara*-thing,
that is *akṣara*-syllable, immortal non-thing.
Of these three – Brahman, *kṣara* and *akṣara* –
kṣara and akṣara
form a *mithuna*-pair in every creature;
Brahman is transcendent.

28 The ancient *śruti*-scriptures say:
Lord-of-creatures Prajāpati Brahmā,
seen in his embodied form,
created the primal elements
and the moving and unmoving multitudes
of the world.

29 Pitāmaha Brahmā ordained also
the rule of Kāla,
the limitations of time-bound life,
and the ceaseless round
of birth and rebirth,
creature turn-and-return.

30 What I am telling you
is what any wise person
who has insight into the ātman
will also say.
All that I have said
is as it should be.

31 The person who sees joy and sorrow
as passing phenomena,
the body as perishable material,
and death built into birth,

32 Who realises that all pleasure
is really a form of pain –
such a person will safely cross
the fearful whirlpool of *saṁsāra.*

33 Dogged by decay and disease and death,
yet seeing Pradhāna as it is,
he sees with serene vision
the divine self-consciousness in all.

34 Not for him the trivial,
he has discovered the ideal.
O finest of men!
Let me explain this further.

35 O Brahmin! This is *jñānam-uttamaṁ,*
that incomparable learning
regarding the eternal and indestructible.
Listen attentively.

SECTION NINETEEN

1 Freed from the bonds of mortality
(continued the Brahmin)
is the person who goes beyond
thinking of himself,
and is immersed in contemplation
of the transcendent silence.

2 Free is the man
who is everyone's friend,
who is serene,
who is sense-controlled,
who has mastered
fear and anger.

3 Free in every way
is the pure and disciplined person
to whom all are as precious
as his own ātman,
who is not proud,
who has no *abhimān*-ego.

4 Free also is the person
to whom life and death are the same,
and pleasure and pain, loss and gain,
and agreeable and disagreeable.

5 Free in every way is the person
who does not covet others' wealth,
who has contempt for no one,
who has risen above the play
of life's *dvandva*-ambivalence,
whose ātman cultivates detachment.

6 Free is the person who has no enemy,
no relative, no children,
who has discarded dharma, artha and kāma,
and given up selfish desires.

7 Free is the person who pursues
neither dharma nor adharma,
who shrugs off past karma,
who finds peace of mind
by purifying his body,
who transcends *dvandva*-duality.

8 The person who performs non-karma,
who is not selfishly motivated,
to whom the world is as transient
as the *aśvattha*-banyan
caught in the ceaseless coils
of birth, death and decay,

9 The person who concentrates his mind
on *vairāgya*-renunciation,
who keeps a vigilant eye
on his weaknesses and defects, –
such a person soon achieves mokṣa
from the fetters that bind him.

10 Free is the person
who sees that the ātman
is without smell, without rasa,
without sound, without touch,
without any form whatsoever,
and absolutely ineffable.

11 Free is the person
who sees that the ātman
is without the guṇas of the five elements,
and cannot be imaged,
is not caused by anything
and is the guṇa-less enjoyer of the guṇas.

12 With the help of clear intelligence
giving up the selfish activities
of the mind and the body,
one achieves the peace of nirvāṇa,
the snuffing-out of desire,
like fire extinguished without fuel.

13 Free is said to be the person
who has given up *saṁskāra*-rituals,
dvandva-duality, worldly possessions,
and practises sense-controlled tapasyā.

14 Freed of *saṁskāra*-ceremonies,
he attains the supreme eternal Brahman,
the serene and the stable,
the forever-lasting indestructible.

15 Let me now deal with yoga-śāstra,
which excels everything.
With yoga-concentration yogis are able
to experience the fulfilled ātman.

16 I will advise you accordingly.
You will then understand
the means by which the ātman within
is the everlasting universal Ātman.

17 Pull back the senses,
and focus on the ātman.
Practise mokṣa-yoga
with the severest tapasyā.

18 Seeing the atman within
as the everlasting universal Ātman,
the insightful Brahmin, yoked to tapasyā,
should follow the yoga-śāstra teachings.

19 A sadhu who single mindedly
focuses his ātman on that Ātman
will certainly see the ātman within
as the everlasting universal Ātman.

20 Self-controlled, focusing on the ātman
with his senses perfectly disciplined,
he will experience the oneness
of this atman with that Ātman.

21 Waking from a dream,
the dreamer recognises a person
saying, "I saw you in my dream!"
Similarly, the sādhu
recognises the post-*samādhi* Ātman
as the ātman seen in deep meditation.

22 Like a person seeing the fibre-essence
of a peeled *muñja*-shoot,
the yogi sees the ātman
of a peeled body.

23 The body is the *muñja*,
the ātman the fibre-essence.
This darshan is the splendid simile
used by the percipient yogi.

24 When a body-bearer sees the ātman
with the help of yoga,
no *īśvara*-lord can overlord him,
he is the *prabhu*-lord of the three worlds.

[XIV:19:25-32]

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25 Whatever bodies he wishes to acquire,
now become his.
Transcending decay and death,
he neither grieves nor rejoices.

26 By the power of yoga,
he outgods the gods.
Dismissing the temporary body,
he reposes in the everlasting Brahman.

27 He sees creatures perish,
but he feels no fear.
He sees creatures suffer,
but he does not despair.

28 He is the serene-minded man,
the ātman-yoked yogi
unperturbed by fierce sorrows
and sentimental attachments

29 Weapons cannot harm him,
death does not frighten him.
Where in the world will you find
a man happier than him?

30 His mind is stable in his ātman.
Freed of the miseries
of age and decay,
he sleeps peacefully.

31 He discards this body,
and acquires the kind he desires.
A yogi who enjoys yoga-power
should never neglect yoga-practice.

32 When the yoga-adept sees this ātman
as one with that everlasting Ātman,
he has no desire to be the equal
of Śatakratu-Indra.

33 Let me explain to you
how singleminded meditation
is practised by a yogi.
The direction in which
one is advised to travel
by the ancient sages –

34 One should fix one's mind firmly there,
and not go astray.
Stay within the potential of the body
in which the ātman presides;
do not let the mind wander
excessively outside,

35 Because these is no outside
when, in deep meditation,
one experiences at the perfect moment
the Total Divinity.

36 That Divine Totality can be sought
also in singleminded meditation,
senses controlled, in an unpeopled forest,
in an ambience of soundlessness.

37 One should focus meditation
on the teeth, palate, tongue,
the throat and the neck,
the heart and the heart's arteries.

38 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
(continued the Brahmin)
After I said this,
the percipient disciple
again asked me complex questions
regarding mokṣa-dharma.

39 "The food that we eat time and again –
how does it get digested?
How does it change into rasa,
how into blood?

40 How does it nourish the flesh,
the narrow, sinews, and bones?
How do the limbs
of creatures grow?

41 How does the growing body
gather vitality?
How are unnourishing foods eliminated,
along with impurities?

42 How does one inhale
and exhale?
Where exactly in the body
is the ātman seated?

43 How does the *jīva*-spirit
endure the body?
What is the colour of the body
in which he lives again?

44 O immaculate revered one!
You must tell me!
O Mādhava-Krishna!
This is what the Brahmin asked.

45 O mahā-muscled foe-destroyer!
I said to him:
Just as you remember an article
you have placed in a room,

46 You should place your mind in your body
and remember it,
and by disciplining the senses,
taking great case
not to be careless,
you should cherish your ātman.

47 Contented in your ātman,
with the deepest dedication
one experiences Brahman,
experience of which
provides the truest insight
into the nature of Pradhāna.

48 That Mahān-Ātman
the eyes do not see,
the senses do not feel;
that Mahān-Ātman
is grasped by the light
of the illumined heart.

49 Everywhere
are its hands and feet;
every where
are its ears;
everywhere pervading,
it energises the universe.

50 The *jīva*-spirit
does not see the ātman
as alienated from the body;
transcending the body
it sees the ātman
as Brahman itself.

51 Serenely smiling,
it sees the ātman
with the insight of the heart.
Self-aware and secure
in that stability,
it attains mokṣa.

52 O finest of the twice-born!
I have clarified this mystery.
Grant me leave to depart.
O Brahmin!
Feel free also to do.
whatever pleases you.

53 That disciple of mine, O Krishna,
a strict-vowed Brahmin of mahā-tapasyā,
listened carefully to me,
and went his way.

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54 Vāsudeva-Krishna continued:
Pārtha-Arjuna!
Saying this to me
on mokṣa-dharma,
that finest of the twice-born
suddenly disappeared.

55 Have you listened attentively,
Pārtha-Arjuna?
You heard it once earlier,
if you recall, in the chariot.

56 Difficult it must be,
O Pārtha-Arjuna,
for a confused mind to grasp it,
difficult for an unreceptive mind;
only that person grasps it
who has a perfectly purified ātman.

57 O bull-brave Bharata!
This mystifies even the gods.
No one in this world,
O Pārtha-Arjuna,
in no place, at no time,
has heard it –

58 That is, no one except you,
O defectless one.
No one with a confused ātman
can hope to grasp it.

59 Son of Kuntī!
The realm of the gods
is crowded
with work-obsessed people.
The gods do not appreciate
transcending the mortality
of the physical body
by renouncing the rewards of action.

60 The supreme fulfilment, Pārtha-Arjuna,
is Sanātana Brahman.
That felicity is attained
by transcending the body.
That felicity is known
as *amṛtatva*-immortality.

61 Dedicated to this dharma,
even those conceived in wicked yonīs,
even women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras
can find the supreme fulfilment.

62 Why is there any need to mention
deeply-learned Brahmins and Kṣatriyas,
who are deep in their sva-dharma
and always meditating on Brahma-loka?

63 These are the basic principles
of mokṣa and its attainment:
its fulfilment, its fruits,
and its problems.

64 O bull-brave Bharata!
Nothing gives more happiness than this.
Son of Pāṇḍu!
Intellectually percipient,
endowed with śraddhā-faith,
gifted with *vikrama*-valour, –

65 If anyone thus blessed,
decides to renounce the transient
and cherish the permanent –
such a person
will soon enough experience
the supreme fulfilment.

66 Nothing more is there to say.
Nothing excels this.
It takes only six months,
Pārtha-Arjuna,
for a dedicated person
to attain this yoga.

SECTION TWENTY

1 Vāsudeva-Krishna continued:
O bull-brave Bharata! Pārtha-Arjuna!
There is, in this connection
an ancient historical story
of a conversation that took place
between a married couple.

2 There was this Brahmin's wife
whose husband knew everything
of every art and science.
She saw him one day
sitting all alone,
and she said to him:

3 "You are my husband, my refuge,
yet you treat me so harshly,
wrapped up in yourself always.
Where's your karma for me?
If you don't see this clearly,
what's going to happen to me?

4 I have heard that a wife
gets the realm her husband attains.
What kind of realm will I get,
having a husband like you?"

5 The Brahmin heard his wife, smiled,
and replied, with a calm ātman:
"O supremely fortune-favoured lady!
O my defectless wife!
I do not want you to think
that you have offended me.

6 In this world only such acts
are placed in the category of karma
which are legitimised by tradition
and seen and endorsed as karma.

7 Intelligent, conscious acts are karma,
not confused and ignorant ones.
The point is that karma never ceases,
not even for a fleeting second.

8 From the instant of one's birth
to the time of getting a new body,
creatures create karma, good or bad,
in deed, in mind, and in speech.

9 When rākṣasas began polluting
visible sanctities like soma and ghee,
I turned away to find repose
in the ātman within me.

10 For that is where Brahman is,
the Beyond-ambivalence-and-duality,
where Soma is, where Agni is;
that is where it flows,
forever free, forever firm,
the energising spirit of life.

11 That is the undecaying Akṣara,
the Celestial Syllable,
worshipped by Brahmā and others
who are dedicated to yoga,
well-versed-in-wisdom, holy-vowed,
strict-disciplined, serene-ātmaned.

12 The nose cannot smell it,
the tongue cannot taste it,
the senses cannot touch it.
Manasā travagamyate:
Only the inseeing mind
can know it as it is.

13 The eye cannot see it,
the ear cannot hear it.
It has no rasa, it has no touch,
it has no taste, it has no form.

14 From it emerges the universe,
into it merges the universe.
The vital life-breaths –
Prāṇa, Apāna, Samāna, Vyāna, Udāna –

15 Emerge from it,
and merge into it.
Prāṇa and Apāna flow
between Samāna and Vyāna.

16 In the state of deep sleep,
Samāna and Vyāna combine.
Permeating all, is Udāna,
between Apāna and Prāṇa.

17 Because it permeates all the life-breaths,
it is Udāna the Spread-breath.
All who are wise-in-Brahman,
the Brahma-vādins,
seek it as their fulfilment
through the practice of tapasyā.

18 The seven-formed Vaiśvānara-fire
shines in the centre of the body
through which flow the energising
five vital life-breaths.

19 Nose, tongue, eye, skin,
ear the fifth,
manas the inseeing heart,
buddhi the discerning intellect, –
these are the seven tongue-flames
of the Vaiśvānara-fire.

20 Seven fuels feed the fire:
What is smelt, what is seen,
what is drunk, what is touched, what is heard,
what is thought, what is understood.

21 The high *ṛtvik*-priests of this fire
are that who smells, that who eats,
that who sees, that who touches, that who hears,
that who thinks, that who understands.

22 O supremely fortune-favoured lady!
Be always vigilant
on what deserves smelling, drinking, seeing,
touching, hearing, thinking, understanding.

23 Seven *hotṛ*-priests offering seven libations
in the seven Vaiśvānara-fire –
those who are learned know
how the body fed with karma
creates a new birth for itself
in a yoni of its own making.

24 These are the seven yonis:
earth, wind,
ākāśa-ether, water, light,
manas and *buddhi.*

25 The guṇa-qualities feed
the sacred yoni-fires,
and the forms of the world
are re-formed in fresh yonis.

26 At the time of cosmic dissolution,
they become the unseen potential;
and when creation reappears,
they become the visibly real.
Rasa-essence and *gandha*-smell
come into new being,

27 Along with form, touch, and sound.
And doubt is born,
and with it solution.
The seven-fold creation!

28 This is how the ancient sages
visualised creation.
Knowledge, known and knower –
the three blazing truths.
Fulfilled and perfected are those
who abide by them.

SECTION TWENTY-ONE

1 Ten *hotṛ*-priests (said the Brahmin),
are listed
in the ancient *itihāsa*-histories.
You should know them.

2 The ear, skin, two eyes, tongue,
nose, two feet, two hands,
the genitals, the anus, *vāyu*-voice –
are the ten *hotṛs*, O lovely lady.

3 Sound, touch, form, rasa,
scent, speech, action, momentum,
semen, urine-and-faeces-discharge –
are the ten libations.

4 The points of the compass, O lovely lady,
wind, sun, moon, earth,
Agni, Viṣṇu, Indra, Prajāpati, Mitra
are the ten sacrificial fires.

5 O deep-thinking lady! Bhāvinī!
The ten *hotṛ*-senses
offer the ten objects of the senses
as libations in the ten fires.

6 *Citta*-discrimination is the ladle,
and the wealth offered
is supreme and pristine knowledge.
The phenomenal world
is very different from the nominal –
so we have heard.

7 Only the mind can grasp
the true nature of things.
The semen-energised body encloses
the matter-knowing spirit.

8 The sastainer of the body
is the Gārhyapatya fire,
which produces the mind-fire
called the Āhavanīya,
into which is poured
the sacred libation,

9 Which produces Vācaspati
the sacred word of the Vedas,
observed by the mind,
which blossoms into forms –
but forms without colours.
Forms cherish the mind."

10 The Brahmin's wife asked:
"Why Vāk-word first –
and mind later?
Is it not true
that word is born
only after mind thinks it?

11 What special authority decides
that *mati*-resolution
draws its sustenance from *citta*-discrimination?
Why is it so difficult
for *mati*-resolution to succeed?
What gets in its way?"

12 The Brahmin replied:
"Apāna is the overlord,
and guides *mati*-resolution to itself –
that's how the mind moves.
Mati and *citta* and mind
are dependant on the overlord.

13 But you asked me
about Word and Mind.
Let me repeat to you
a discussion they once had.

14 Word and Mind approached
the Ātman-of-creatures and asked:
'*Vibho*! Radiant one! Tell us:
Which of us is superior?'

15 Bhagavān Ātman said:
'The Mind.'
To which the goddess of learning
Sarasvatī said:
'I will be your Kāmadhuk,
the all-desire-fulfilling cow.'
This was the way
Vāk-Word honoured itself.

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16 You should know (continued the Brahmin)
I mean two kinds of Mind:
the moving and the unmoving.
The unmoving mind is mine,
the moving mind
is in your hands.

17 Mantra, *varṇa*-letters, *svara*-tone
are different symbols
of the moving mind.
The symbol is always superior.

18 *Śobhane*! Lovely lady Sarasvatī!
You come here,
and you praise yourself.
You have inspired me to speak up.

19 O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
Between Prāṇa and Apāna
lies the goddess of speech
Vāk-devī Sarasvatī,
Getting distanced from Prāṇa,
sinking into Apāna,
she ran to Prajāpati and said:
'*Bhagavan*! Favour me!'

20 Prāṇa re-appeared,
and re-energised Vāk the Word.
Which is why, when exhaling,
Word remains silent.

21 Voice is always spoken,
or unspoken.
Voice that is not spoken is superior
to voice that is spoken.

22 Like a docile milch cow,
the spoken voice yields the sweet rasa
of the Eternal fulfilment
of Brahman-illumination.

23 *Śucismite!* Sweet-smiling lady!
Bhāratī-Sarasvatī,
the goddess of speech and learning,
is a wish-fulfilling cow.
She is divine and not-divine.
Know which is which."

24 The Brahmin's wife asked:
"What did Sarasvatī devī say
when, despite the desire to speak,
no word was spoken?"

25 The Brahmin replied:
"Vāk is produced
in the body by Prāṇa,
and attains to Apāna.
Transformed into Udāna,
it emerges from the body
and straddles all as Vyāna.

26 And then Vāk lives in Samāna.
Vāk spoke as thus explained.
The unmoving Mind is excellent,
and Vāk-devī also,
the moving Word,
is likewise excellent."

SECTION TWENTY-TWO

1 In this connection (said the Brahmin)
is narrated
an ancient historical story
regarding the seven *hotṛ*-priests.

2 The nose, eye, tongue, skin,
ear the fifth,
manas-mind and *buddhi*-intelligence –
are the seven *hotṛ*-priets.

3 They live in the subtle *ākāśa*-space,
of the body,
yet they do not see each other.
O lovely lady,
it is up to you to recognise
these *hotṛ*-priests.

4 The Brahmin's wife said:
"How is it that,
living in subtle *ākāśa*-space,
they do not see each other?
Bhagavan! Revered one!
Describe their natures to me."

5 Not knowing the guṇas
amounts to ignorance of their nature,
knowing the guṇas
amounts to knowledge of their nature.
These seven have no knowledge
of each other's guṇas.

6 The tongue, eye, ear, skin,
mind and intelligence
have no real knowledge of smell.
Only the nose has that.

7 The nose, eye, ear, skin,
mind and intelligence
have no real knowledge of rasa-taste.
Only the tongue has that.

8 The nose, tongue, ear, skin,
mind and intelligence
have no real knowledge of form.
Only the eye has that.

9 The nose, tongue, eye, ear,
intelligence and mind
have no real knowledge of touch.
Only the skin has that.

10 The nose, tongue, eye, skin,
mind and intelligence
have no real knowledge of sound.
Only the skin has that.

11 The nose, tongue, eye, skin,
ear and intelligence
have no real knowledge of problems.
Only the mind has that.

12 The nose, tongue, eye, skin,
ear and mind
have no real knowledge of conviction.
Only the intelligence has that.

13 O enchanting lady!
It is in this connection
one hears the historical story,
the *purātana itihāsa*
of the conversation
between the senses and the mind.

14 "The nose cannot smell without me,"
said the mind.
"The tongue cannot taste rasa
without me.
The eye cannot see form
without me.
The skin cannot experience touch
without me.

15 The ear cannot hear sound
without me.
I am the finest
of all things phenomenal.
Ahamasmi sanātanam:
I am the Eternal One!

16 If I am not there,
the senses cannot shine:
they are like a vacant house,
an extinguished fire.

17 No one can know about guṇas
without me,
no matter how hard he tries
with his senses.
You cannot set fire to wood
that is damp and shrivelled."

18 The senses replied:
"It pleases you to think so.
What you say would be true
if you could enjoy life without us.

19 If you can have have fun
and your *prāṇa*-breath flourishes
when we are no more there,
then you may be right;

20 And you may be right if,
when we lie low,
you enjoy life the same as you did
with our cooperation.

21 If you have such power over us,
try this experiement:
ask your nose to experience colour,
your eye to taste rasa.

22 Ask your ear to smell,
your tongue to touch,
your skin to hear,
your intelligence to feel.

23 Rules are not for the powerful,
rules are for the weak.
Seek new sensations if you must,
not those experienced by others.

24 Be like a disciple who goes
to a *śruti*-learned teacher,
and, having imbibed *śruti*-wisdom,
return fortified.

25 Come to us and learn,
awake or asleep,
what we reveal to you
in the past and in the future.

26 Even creatures of little intelligence
and perverse thinking
have to depend on us
if they want to continue living.

27 You can chase many distractions,
and indulge in many fancies,
but if you want to enjoy life
you must use your senses.

28 Like fire that is finished
when not fed with fuel,
dream-pleasures perish
unless fed on the senses,
like a body whose *prāṇa*–
breath is all used up.

29 You are right when you say
we do not know our guṇas,
each other's natures.
Without us, however,
what good are you?
Where is your happiness?"

SECTION TWENTY-THREE

1 The Brahmin continued:
O supremely favoured lady!
One hears in this connection
the historical story
of the *yājya-hotṛs,*
the priests of the ritual.

2 According to the deeply learned,
the five supreme priests
are Prāṇa, Apāna, Udāna,
Samāna and Vyāna.

3 The Brahmin's wife said:
I was under the impression
the seven *hotṛ* priests were supreme.
Please explain to me
how you have made supreme
these five *hotṛs*.

4 The Brahmin replied:
Nourished by Prāṇa,
wind takes birth as Apāna.
Nourished by Apāna,
wind is transformed
into Vyāna.

5 Nourished by Vyāna,
wind takes birth as Udāna;
nourished by Udāna,
wind is transformed into Samāna.

6 These saintly *santa*-energies
asked the primal Pitāmaha:
"Tell us:
which among us is the best?"

7 Brahmā replied:
"I alone am the best,
for when I am absent,
their life-breaths are stilled,
and when I move,
all creatures move."

8 And Prāṇa replied:
"I alone am the best,
for when I am absent,
their life-breaths are stilled,
and when I move,
all creatures move."

9 The Brahmin continued:
Śubhe! Lovely lady!
Prāṇa said this, and hid himself,
and re-manifested himself.
Samāna and Udāna also
spoke up, saying:

10 "You do not live in the body,
Prāṇa, as we do.
You are not the best.
Only Apāna is under you."
Prāṇa started moving about.
Apāna said to him:

11 "When I am absent,
all the *prāṇa* life-breaths
of creatures are stilled.
I move – and creatures move.
So I am the greatest.
Look – I am leaving!"

12 The Brahmin continued:
Both Vyāna and Udāna
said to Apāna:
"You are not the best.
Remember, Apāna,
only Prāṇa is under you."

13 Apāna started moving about.
Vyāna said to him:
"I am the best of all.
I will tell you why.

14 When I am absent,
all the *prāṇa* life-breaths
of creatures are stilled.
I move – and creatures move.
So I am the greatest.
Look – I am leaving!"

15 The Brahmin continued:
Vyāna then hid himself,
and re-materialised.
Prāṇa, Apāna, Udāna and Samāna said:
"You are not the best.
Only Samāna is under you."

16 Vyāna started moving about
and Samāna said to him:
"I am the best of all.
I will tell you why.

17 "When I am absent,
all the *prāṇa* life-breaths
of creatures are stilled.
I move – and creatures move.
So I am the greatest.
Look – I am leaving!"

18 The Brahmin continued:
Samāna then hid himself,
and re-materialised.
Prāṇa, Apāna Vyāna and Udāna said:
"You are not the best, O Samāna.
Ohly Vyāna is under you."

19 Samāna started moving about,
and Udāna said to him:
"I am the best of all,
I will tell you why.

20 When I am absent,
all the *prāṇa* life-breaths
of creatures are stilled.
I move – and creatures move.
So I am the greatest.
Look – I am leaving!"

21 Udāna then hid himself,
and re-materialised.
Prāṇa, Apāna Vyāna and Udāna
said to him:
"Udāna! You are not the best.
Only Vyāna is under you."

22 The Brahmin continued:
To all of them Brahmā
Prājapati Lord-of-creatures said:
"You are the greatest,
and you are not the greatest.
You need each other.
Interdependence is your dharma,
not depending on others.

23 Each best by itself,
but dharma-dependent on another."
Prājapati Brahmā
said to the assembled life-breaths:

24 Moving breath and unmoving breath –
it is the same breath.
One breath – which is also five.
My own Ātman is one:
and that Unity
becomes multiplicity.

25 Be happy with each other.
Seek each other's welfare.
Svasti brajata!
May well-being be your glory!
Bhadraṁ vo!
Go hand in hand in peace."

SECTION TWENTY-FOUR

1 In this connection (continued the Brahmin)
is the historical story
of a discussion that took place
between Nārada and ṛṣi Devamata.

2 Devamata asked:
"When a creature is born,
what comes first with it –
Prāṇa, Apāna, Samāna, Vyāna, or Udāna?"

3 "Everything in the world," replied Narāda.
"is *dvandva* – ambivalent.
A creature is the product
of mixture of opposites.
The *prāṇa* life-breaths are *dvandva* too –
whether up, across, or down-moving."

4 "What produces a creature?" asked Devamata.
"What is the first cause?
What is *prāṇa* – ambivalence –
up, across, and down-moving?"

5 "From *saṁkalpa*-yearning," replied Nārada,
"is born pleasure.
Pleasure is also born from sound,
rasa and colour.

6 From *śukra*-semen, mixed with blood,
is born *prāṇa*;
semen influenced by *prāṇa*
is transformed into Apāna.

7 Pleasure is born from semen also
and from rasa:
this appears in the form of Udāna,
the pleasure of sexual union.

8 Kāma produces semen
and the menstrual flow.
Samāna and Vyāna produce
semen and the menstrual flow.
So they are called *sāmānya*,
the same pair.

9 Prāṇa and Apāna are ambivalent:
they flow up and down.
Vyāna and Samāna are ambivalent:
they flow transversely.

10 Agni is all the gods.
So declares the Veda.
It is the Veda that illuminates
the mind of a Brahmin.

11 The smoke of that fire is tamas-darkness,
its ashes rajas-passion.
Everything is created from the oblation
that is offered in that fire.

12 Those who know the meaning of yajña
as service and sacrifice
know that Samāna and Vyāna
are produced by *sattva*-goodness.
Prāṇa and Apāna are *ājyabhāga*-offerings
enclosing the *hutāśana*-fire.

13 This is the supreme form of Udāna,
according to Brahmins.
Let me now tell you about
the *nir-dvandva*, the non-ambivalent.

14 Day and night are dvandva
enclosing the *hutāśana*-fire.
which is the supreme form of Udāna,
according to Brahmins.

15 *Sat* and *asat*, existence and non-existence,
are an ambivalent pair
enclosing the *hutāśana*-fire,
which, according to Brahmins,
is the *parama-rūpam*,
the supreme form of Udāna.

16 Sāmāna first; then Vyāna.
Vyāna through Samāna creates karma.
The third state of consciousness –
beyond waking and dreaming –
is also created by the movement
of Samāna.

17 The perfect serenity of sānti
is created only by Vyāna;
that śānti is the blissful peace
of Sanātana Brahman;

SECTION TWENTY-FIVE

1 In this connection (said the Brahmin)
is the ancient *itīhāsa*-story
of the four-sacrifice ritual,
the Catur hotṛ.

2 Gracious lady, *bhadre*!
It is described in detail.
Let me present to you
its marvellous mystery.

3 O deep-thinking lady! *Bhāvinī*!
The cosmos is straddled
by the four *hotṛ*-priests:
kāraṇa, karmā, Kartā, mokṣa –
the cause, the deed,
the doer, the transcendence.

4 Let me begin with the causes.
The causes of the guṇas
are nose, tongue, eye, skin,
ear the fifth,
mind and *buddhi*-intellect –
seven altogether.

5 Smell, rasa, colour, sound,
touch the fifth,
mind-objects and intellect-objects –
are the seven causes of karma.

6 The smeller, the eater, the one who sees,
the speaker,
the listener who is the fifth,
the thinker, the knower –
these seven are the *karta-hetus*,
the doers of deeds.

7 Gloriously gifted with guṇas,
they enjoy
the pure and impure pleasures
of the guṇas.

8 These guṇas are like gods,
and those who are learned
know that they enjoy the oblations
as ordained for each guṇa.

9 The unlearned, the ignorant
eats with *mamatva*,
egoistically, selfishly.
The person who cooks only for himself
is afflicted with *mamatva*,
the fault of me-ness.

10 The eater of food
that should not be eaten
and the wine-drinker
invites his own doom.
He abuses the food,
and the food ruins him.

11 The man of learning, however,
respects the food he digests;
he becomes the lord of food.
He is not in any way stained
by whatever he eats,
he is fully fault-free.

12 What is grasped by the mind,
what is spoken in worlds,
what is heard by the ear,
what is seen by the eye,

13 What is felt by touch,
what is smelt by the nose, –
all these must be disciplined
before being offered as oblations.
They are the senses to be disciplined
by the over-riding power of the mind.

14 They are the guṇas to be offered
as oblations in the fire
that shines in the body –
my celestial transcendent residence.
My yoga-yajña has begun.
Its root is the light of knowledge,
its *śrotra*-ascent is *prāṇa*,
its *śāstra*-descent is *apāna*,
its *dakṣiṇā*-gift
is nothing less than everything.

15 The *kartā*-doer
is the ego,
The *anumantā*-mind
is the thinker,
The ātman
is the *buddhi*-intellect.
These three comprise
the forms of Brahma:
They are the *hotā*-priest
the *adhvaryu*-priest
the *udgātā*-priest
The *śastra*-weapon
of the *praśāstā*-priest
is truth.
And *apavarga*-emancipation
the full-and-final-freedom
is the *dakṣiṇā*-offering.

16 Those who know about Nārāyaṇa
offer *ṛca*-songs extolling Nārāyaṇa.
Animals were offered in the past
to the divinity that is Nārāyaṇa.

17 *Sāma*-songs are sung to Nārāyaṇa,
sages have had its darshan.
O timid one! Why are you unsure?
Nārāyaṇa is the Divine One,
Nārāyaṇa is the Sarvātmā,
the Soul-of-all, the Celestial Totality.

SECTION TWENTY-SIX

1 The Brahmin continued:

There is only one *śāstā*,
only one ruler,
There is no *dvitīya*,
no second.
This is the ruler
who resides in the heart.
I will speak of him,
I am inspired by him.
Like flowing water I move,
inspired by him.

2 There is only one guru,
there is no second.
This is the guru
who resides in the heart.
I will speak of him,
I am inspired by him.
Inspired by that guru
are the *panaaga*-serpents
who have venom in their fangs;
inspired by him
were the Dānava antigods
defeated always in battle.

3 There is only one friend,
there is no second.
This is the *bandhu*
who resides in the heart.
I will speak of him,
I am inspired by him.
Inspired by him,
friends become relatives,
and relatives become friends,
and the Seven Ṛṣis,
inspired by him,
shine in the sky.

4 There is only one *śrota*,
only one ceaseless flow,
there is no *dvitīya*,
no second.
This is the flow
that nourishes the heart.
Inspired by that guru,
I will speak of him.
Having livid with that guru
as one should with that guru,
Śakra-Indra gained lordship
of all the worlds.

5 There is only one enemy,
there is no second.
This is the enemy
who resides in the heart.
Inspired by that enemy,
I will speak of him.
Inspired by that guru
are the *pannaga*-serpents
who have venom and hate
for the world in their fangs.

6 In this connection is narrated
the *purātana itihāsa*,
the historical story of the conversation
that took place
between Prajāpati, the serpents,
the gods and the ṛṣis.

7 The gods, ṛṣis, Nāgas and antigods
sat around Prajāpati,
and asked the Lord-of-creatures:
"What is best for us?"

8 To this enquiry about the ideal,
Bhagavān Prajāpati Brahmā intoned
the single syllable: Auṁ.
They heard, and they departed.

9 Of those who went away hurriedly,
seeking their fulfilment,
the snakes interpreted the advice
to mean that biting was best.

10 And naturally the antigods interpreted it
to mean boasting was best,
the gods to mean gift-giving,
the maharṣis discipline.

11 One ruler, one word, one advice –
yet the snakes, the gods,
the ṛṣis and Dānava antigods
interpreted it differently.

12 One hears one thing,
one understands something else.
There is no guru greater
than the guru within oneself.

13 On that guru's advice
is based one's karma.
The guru, the knower, the hearer, the enemy
are all located in your heart.

14 Be wicked in the world,
and the world will brand you wicked.
Be noble in the world,
and the world will praise you as noble.

15 Delight in the pleasures of the senses
by pursuing kāma,
and you will be a kāmacārī.
Discipline the demands of the senses
and you will be praised
as a brahmacārī.

16 Give up vows and karma
and devote yourself to Brahma,
and you will be the brahmacārī
Brahmā-like lord of the world.

17 Brahma is the fuel
    Brahma is the fire
Brahma is the origin
    Brahma is the water
Brahma is the guru . . .
    To him all is Brahma.

18 The wise know the subtle nature
    of brahmacarya.
They follow the advice of the heart,
    the Kṣetrajña,
the knower of the field
    which is the body.

SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN

1 The Brahmin continued:

Where desires and intentions
    are the flies and mosquitoes,
where sorrow and joy
    are the cold and heat,
where *moha*–delusion
    is the dreadful darkness
where greed and disease
    are the slithering serpents

2 Where wealth is the main road
    and oneself the sole traveller,
where kāma and anger
    are the highway robbers –
I have crossed that mahā-fortress
    of the material world,
and I have entered the refuge
    of the mahā-forest of Brahma.

3 The Brahmin's wife asked:

O mahā-wise one! Mahā-prājña!
    Where is this forest?
Where its trees, rivers, hills, mountains?
    How far is this forest?

4 The Brahmin replied:

Other than it there is nothing.
Nothing is more *sama*-tranquil.
Nothing is different from it.
Nothing gives greater misery.

5 Nothing is smaller than it,
nothing is larger.
Nothing is more subtle,
nothing gives greater happiness.

6 The twice-born who enter it
transcend joy and sorrow.
They fear no one,
and no one fears them.

7 Seven mahā-trees form this forest,
their seven fruits relished by seven guests,
and seven āśramas, seven samādhis,
seven *dīkṣā*-initiations.

8 What lovely trees
fulfil this forest
with celestial fruits
and five-coloured flowers!

9 So many lovely trees
fulfilling this forest
with two-coloured fruits
and a plethora of flowers!

10 So many lovely trees
fulfilling this forest
with a fragrant variety
of two-coloured flowers and fruits!

11 So many lovely trees
fulfilling this forest
with a fragrant variety
of single-coloured flowers and fruits!

12 There are two mahā-trees
fulfilling this forest
with a wonderful variety
of multi-coloured flowers and fruits.

13 One sacred fire in this forest,
one pure-minded Brahmin in this forest,
the five senses fuelling the fire in this forest,
seven kinds of mokṣa in the forest,
dīkṣā-initiation brings fruit in this forest,
the guṇas are the fruits in this forest,
and seven are the guests
who relish the fruits in this forest.

14 In different parts of this forest,
mahā-ṛṣis reside as guests;
they are revered,
and then they are no more.
That forest is no more,
another dazzling forest appears.

15 In the new forest shines
the Tree of Wisdom Prajñā-vṛkṣa
whose fruit is mokṣa
and the ceaseless peace of śānti
its soothing shade,
knowledge its refuge,
fulfilment its water,
and Kṣetrajña
the knower-of-the-body
its central sun.

16 The good and the saintly
who shelter in this forest
are freed of fear forever.
Upwards and downwards
and on both sides extends
this illimitable forest.

17 Dwelling forever in this forest
are seven girls,
modest and shy, with faces lowered,
radiant girls, world-mothers,
sucking into themselves
the rasas of all creatures,
like the transient and unreal
feeding on *satya*-truth and the real.

18 In that forest live
and from it emerge
the Seven Ṛṣis headed by Vasiṣṭha,
the seven perfected ones.

19 Like sunrays flowing from the sun,
Seven radiances flow from the forest:
Yaśa-fame
Varca-resplendence
bhaga-auspiciousness
Vijaya-victory
Siddha-perfection
Teja-energy.

20 There are hills and mountains
in that Brahma-born forest,
and rivulets and rivers also
rippling with water ceaselessly flowing.

21 In a *saṅgama* in that forest
is a *yajña*-spot
at the sacred confluence of rivers,
where the Pitāmaha is experienced
by all who are *svātma-tṛptā,*
serene in their ātman.

22 They merge their individual ātman
in the universal Ātman,
curbing their longings,
practising noble vows,
dedicated to tapasyā
which consumes their impurities.

23 This is the forest of Wisdom,
the Vidyāraṇya
praised by lovers of wisdom,
the Vido-janāḥ.
They praise the tranquillity acquired
by the patience of the wise.

24 This is the Sanctified Forest,
the Puṇyam-araṇyaṁ,
known by the Brahma-knowers,
the Brahmins.
They know the knower-of-the-body,
the Kṣetrajña.

SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT

1 The Brahmin continued:

It is not I who smell scents.
It is not I who taste rasa.
It is not I who see colours.
It is not I who hear sounds.
It is not I who wish
and desire and hope and plan.

2 It is my *svabhāva*, my nature,
the way I am,
which desires the desirable,
and dislikes the dislikable.
Kāma-desire and *dveṣa*-dislike
proceed from one's nature,
like *prāṇa* and *apāna* life-breaths
which energise the body.

3 But apart from all these
is the eternal Bhūtātman,
the ātman in all creatures,
which is perceived by the wise.
That is where I am,
within but not attached to anything
through kama and anger
and debility and death.

4 Not desiring the desirable,
not disliking the dislikable,
my *sva-bhāva* is not tainted,
as a lotus-leaf is not tainted.

5 Permanent, stable, eternal,
it looks serenely
at the transient and ephemeral
that constitute *sva-bhāva.*
It is not trapped
in the net of karma,
as the sun's radiance is not trapped
in the net of the sky.

6 O illustrious lady! Yaśasvinī!
Regarding this,
there is a historical story
of a conversation
between an *adhvaryu* and a *yati*
which you must hear.

7 Seeing an animal sprinkled with water
being readied for sacrifice
in a yajña-karma,
a *yati*-ascetic
rebuked an *adhvaryu*-priest:
"This is *hiṁsā*! Murder!"

8 The *adhvaryu* replied:
"The goat is not harmed.
According to *śruti*-scriptures,
he gets the supreme good.

9 What's earth in him,
goes back to earth.
What's water in him,
goes back to water.

10 His eye enters the sun,
his ears the different directions,
his *prāṇa*-breaths
enter *ākāśa*-space.
I follow the *āgama*-scriptures,
I have done no wrong."

[XIV:28:11-18]

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11 "If you are doing such good
to the goat," said the *yati*,
"by snuffing out his *prāṅa*,
then this *yajña*
is all for the goat's good.
How does it help you?

12 Go to the goat's brother,
father, mother,
loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend,
and get their permission.
Take the goat with you –
he depends on them.

13 Go and meet them.
Their approval is essential.
Listen to what they say,
and then make up your mind.

14 But you have already
snuffed out the *prāṅa* of this goat.
If you ask me,
only his lifeless body is left.

15 What use is a lifeless body
except as fuel?
What pleasure do you get
killing a goat for fuel?

16 The supreme dharma is ahiṁsā –
so the wise elders declare.
Only that karma is worth doing
which is non-violent.

17 Take this vow:
'I will practise ahiṁsā.'
Anything else will lead
to gross mischief and evil.

18 Praiseworthy and pleasurable
is ahiṁsā for all life.
This is clear enough.
Let us not confuse matters."

19 The *adhvarga* replied:
"You enjoy fragrance
that belongs to the earth.
You enjoy the rasas
that belong to liquids.
You enjoy the colours and forms
that belong to shining bodies.
You enjoy the feel
of objects that have guṇas
that you can touch.

20 You enjoy the sounds
that belong to *ākāśa*-space.
You enjoy thoughts with the mind.
Think this over carefully –
all these have life in them
they are -phenomena.

21 That being so,
are you not taking life?
Are you not involved in *hiṁsā*?
Any effort involves violence.
Na-asti ceṣṭa binā hiṁsā.
So, twice-born one?"

22 "The ātman has two aspects,"
replied the *yati*:
"*akṣara*-imperishable, *kṣara*-perishable.
The *akṣara* is *sad-bhāva* –
it always is: that is its nature.
The *kṣara* is *sva-bhava* –
it limitedly is: that is its nature.
So they say.

23 The *praṇa* life-breaths
The tongue
The mind
Sattva-goodness
Rajas-energy –
These have perishable existences.
Who transcends these
Who transcends life's duality
Who does not have expectations

24 Who treats all creatures equally
Who rises above *mama*-me-ness
Who disciplines his ātman
Who is unattached to things –
Only such a person
Can be said to be without fear.

25 O finest of clear thinkers!
One should always mix
with the noble and the good.
Listening to you,
I find my mind filled
with shining lucidity.

26 *Bhagavan*! Revered one!
Listening to you
makes me feel divinely blessed,
O twice-born one!
I have done no wrong
performing my mantra-chanted ritual."

27 The *yati* finished speaking
(continued the Brahmin)
and lapsed into silence.
The *adhvarya*-priest,
his confusion clarified,
completed the mahā-sacrifice.

28 Brahma-knowers know this mokṣa
in its supreme subtlety,
and they abide by the darshan
of the Kṣetrajña,
the knower-of-the-field
who dwells in the body.

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SECTION TWENTY-NINE

1 The Brahmin continued:
O lovely-minded lady! *Bhāvinī*!
In this connection
one hears of a discussion
between Kārtavīrya and Samudra.

2 The name of the rājā
was Kārtāvīryārjuna,
and he had a thousand arms;
with the power of his bow,
he subjugated the entire
ocean-surrounded earth.

3 We have heard that it so happened,
once, he let loose on the ocean,
in a fit of pride,
hudreds of arrows.

4 Samudra the Ocean namaskāra-ed him,
and, hands folded in *añjali*,
said: "Why these arrows, brave one?
Tell me what you want from me.

5 *Vibho*! Radiant lord!
O tiger-brave rājā!
Your arrows are killing the creatures
who shelter in me.
Instead, you should remove
whatever fears they have."

6 Arjuna replied: "Show me a man,
any wielder of the bow,
who equals me in war-skill;
let him face me."

7 "You must have heard, O rājā,"
said Samudra,
"of the mahā-ṛṣi Jamadagni.
He has a brilliant son.
Go to him,
and be his guest."

8 Hugely incensed,
the rājā proceeded to the āśrama
where he was met
by Rāma-Paraśurāma himself.

9 With his relatives and friends,
he indulged in mischief
that offended the mahātmā
Rāma-Paraśurāma.

10 O lotus-eyed lady! *Kamala-locane*!
The illimitable energy
of Paraśurāma blazed forth
and consumed the hostile warriors.

11 Brandishing his battle-axe,
Paraśurāma sliced
the thousand-armed king
like a many-branching tree.

12 They saw him killed,
and his kinsmen
rushed at Paraśurāma
with *śakti*-spears.

13 Paraśurāma readied his bow,
climbed into his chariot,
and deluged with his arrows
the warriors of the earth-lord.

14 Terrorised by the attack
of Jamadagni's son,
some Kṣatriyas hid in mountain caves,
like lion-harassed deer.

15 So terrified were they
that they forgot their Kṣatriya karma,
and their children,
unable to find Brahmin mates,
became Vṛṣalas,
low-caste Śūdras.

16 Because they gave up Kṣatriya-dharma,
all those Kṣatriyas
became low-caste Vṛṣalas:
Dravidas, Ābhiras, Puṇḍras, Śabaras.

17 The children who were fathered
on Kṣatriya women by Brahmin men –
on women whose heroic children
had all been killed earlier –
were all repeatedly slaughtered
by Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma.

18 Twentyone times did Paraśurāma indulge
in this over-kill.
Finally, a sweet, celestial voice,
heard by all the world's people,

19 Said to Paraśurāma:
"Rāma! Rāma!
Stop this ceaseless slaughter!
Tāta! My son!
What merit is there in killing
this gang of Kṣatriyas again and again?"

20 And mahātmā Paraśurāma's grancestors
headed by Ṛcīka said:
"O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
Enough! No more!"

21 Unable to endure the slaughter
of his father,
Paraśurāma replied to the ṛṣis:
"You must not stop me!"

22 The *pitṛ*-ancestors said:
"O finest of victory-winners!
Stop killing these Kṣatriyas!
You are a Brahmin.
It is not right for you
to kill these kings."

SECTION THIRTY

1 The *pitṛ*-ancestors said:
O finest of the twice-born!
In this connection
is an ancient *itihāsa*-story.
Listen to it,
and after understanding it,
do what it teaches.

2 This happened a long time ago.
A rāja-ṛṣi named Alarka,
excelling in supreme mahā-tapasyā,
was renowned famously
as a truth-speaker,
a rigid-vowed mahātmā.

3 With the power of his bow,
he subdued the sea-girt earth;
after accomplishing this grand karma,
he thought of subtler matters.

4 O mahā-minded one!
He gave up his mahā-karma
and, sitting at the foot of a tree,
he concentrated on subtle matters.

5 Alarka said:
"It's my mind that is strong.
If I can conquer my mind,
all victories will become meaningful.
I have many outside enemies,
but I'll shoot my arrows
at the other enemies,
the ones inside me.

6 Fickle is the mind,
restless its influence on humans.
My sharp arrows
will be aimed at my mind."

7 The mind said:
"Your arrows, Alarka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die.

8 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
Alarka reflected deeply,
and said:

9 "It's my nose that smells perfumes,
and hankers for them.
So I'll aim my sharp arrows
at my nose."

10 The nose said:
"Your arrows, Alarka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die.

11 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
Alarka reflected deeply,
and said:

12 "It's my tongue that savours rasas
and hankers for them.
So I'll aim my sharp arrows
at my tongue."

13 The tongue said:
"Your arrows, Alarka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die.

14 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
Alarka reflected deeply,
and said:

15 "It's my skin that enjoys touch,
and hankers for objects.
I'll shred my skin
with *kaṅka*-feathered arrows."

16 The skin said:
"Your arrows, Alorka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die.

17 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
Alarka reflected deeply,
and said:

18 "It's my ear that hears sounds,
and hankers for them.
I'll aim my sharp arrows
at my ear."

19 The ear said:
"Your arrows, Alarka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die.

20 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
Alarka reflected deeply,
and said:

21 "My eye sees shapes and forms,
and hankers for them.
So I'll aim my sharp arrows
at my eye."

22 They eye said:
"Your arrows, Alarka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die.

23 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
Alarka reflected deeply,
and said:

24 "It's my *prañja*-intelligence
that decides everything.
So I'll aim my sharp arrows
at my *buddhi*-intellect."

25 The *budhi*-intellect said:
"Your arrows, Alarka, cannot harm me.
You will harm yourself.
You will die."

26 Try very different arrows
if you want to kill me."
The Brahmin continued:
What happened was that Alarka,
practising the severest tapasyā,
the most difficult tapasyā,
nonetheless could not find the arrows
to conquer these seven.

27 So *prabhu*-lord Alarka
focused his concentration intensely.
O finest of the twice-born!
He concentrated for a long time;

28 Then, that finest of fine-minded men,
realising nothing excelled
the glory and power of yoga,
devoted himself
to single-minded absorption
in the serenity of yoga,

29 And, with all the valour he could summon,
he conquered his senses
with the strength of the single arrow
of yoga-meditation,
and experienced one-ness with his ātman
which is life's supreme fulfilment.

30 Wonderstruck,
the rāja-ṛṣi broke into song:
'Aho! how sad to be hurled
Always in the material world!

31 How sad to be slobbering for pleasures
Plentifully gathered in royal treasures!
Late have I learnt this lesson from *bhoga*:
No happiness in life is higher than yoga.'

32 The Pitāmaha said:
"Rāma! Paraśurāma! Learn! Learn!
Practise severe tapasyā
Keep this in mind!
Stop killing the Kṣatriyas!
Pursue your highest good."

33 As advised by his grandfathers,
Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma
practised severe tapasyā;
having done that, he attained
he attained the supreme goal
of mahā-fortune-favoured fulfilment.

SECTION THIRTY-ONE

1 The Brahmin continued:
There are three enemies in this world.
If you go by their guṇas,
they add up to nine.
Praharṣa-pleasure, *prīti*-gratification,
and *ānanda*-joy
are the *sāttvika* guṇas.

2 *Tṛṣṇā*-hankering, *krodha*-anger
and *abhisamrambha*-hatred
are the guṇas of rajas.
śrama-fatigue, *tandrā*-laziness,
and *moha*-delusion
are the guṇas of tamas.

3 The victorious one is he
who, with deep dedication,
overcoming laziness, disciplining his senses,
with a serene ātman,
shoots his showers of arrows
at these guṇas inside him.

4 Those who know the time-cycles
of the ancient past
chant some *gāthā*-songs about this
that were sung once
by rājā Ambarīṣa
who had attained serenity.

5 When, once, vices became rampant
and goodness was reviled,
mahā-illustrious Ambarīṣa resolved
to assert his royal authority

6 Purifying himself of defects
and offering pūjā-respect
to the noble and good and righteous,
he attained mahā-*siddhi*,
the pinnacle of perfection,
and he sang these gāthās:

7 *Many of my vices I have crushed:*
I have done much.
But the worst vice of all
I have not been able to touch.

8 *This is the vice that prevents*
a person from desire-renunciation;
duped by desire, he progressively declines
into even worse degradation.

9 *This is the vice that makes him do*
what should not be done.
Slice greed with a sharp sword –
and happiness is won!

10 *Yearning comes from greed,*
restlessness comes from yearning.
The man given to greed
is with rajas-*guṇa burning.*
And when his greed is gratified,
He becomes tamas-*guṇa-tied.*

11 *Victim of the ceaseless round*
of birth after birth,
trapped in his karma,
he remains on the earth.
For when his life ends,
his body bereft of breath
reappears again in the cycle
of birth and death.

12 *Know this. Know this well.*
And give up greed.
It is the rule of the ātman
that you really need.
That is the only rule
of which I sing.
There is no other rājā.
The ātman is the king.

13 This was the *gāthā*-song
of illustrious Ambarīṣa
regarding rule and authority.
He knew what to focus on –
the singlemost worst vice –
lobha-greed.

SECTION THIRTY-TWO

1 The Brahmin continued:

In this connection, O deep-thinking lady,
is the historical story
of a discussion that took place
between a Brahmin and Janaka.

2 There was this Brahmin
who was guilty of a crime.
To punish him, the rājā ordered:
"You are banished from the kingdom."

3 To that finest of rājās,
the Brahmin replied:
"Enlighten me, O rājā,
on the borders of your kingdom.

4 O radiant one! *Vibho*!
O lord of the earth! *Mahīpate*!
I will obey your order
to leave your kingdom,
and seek shelter in the kingdom
of another rājā."

5 The words of the illustrious Brahmin
made rājā Janaka
sigh deeply and worriedly.
But he kept silent.

6 Like Rahu eclipsing the sun,
it seemed as if
a cloud of unknowing had suddenly
struck the rājā dumb.

7 After some time, the king recovered,
his dismay dispelled.
Janaka thought for a while,
then he said to the Brahmin:

8 "I inherited a vast kingdom
from my *pitṛs* and *pitāmahas*,
but not knowing the boundaries
of the territories under my rule,

9 I searched the entire earth
and all of Mithilā.
Failing to get the details,
I enquired from my subjects.

10 No answer from them, either.
I was very distressed.
But the uneasiness dissipated in time,
and I thought:

11 Could it be I have no kingdom?
Or is the whole world mine?
In one sense, even my body is not mine;
in another, the earth as all mine.

12 O finest of the twice-born!
It seems to me
the earth belongs as much to others
as it is mine.
So, go wherever it pleases you,
and live there happily."

13 The Brahmin said:
"Since this kingdom
is your ancestral property,
by what logic
are you able to argue
'It is not mine'?

14 And what is the logic behind saying
everything is yours?
How can everything simultaneously
be yours and not yours?"

15 "In this karma-ridden world,"
replied Janaka,
"every-thing comes to an end.
So it seems to me.
There is nothing in it, therefore,
that is really mine.

16 'Whose wealth is this? Whose property?'
These are the words of the Vedas.
There is nothing in this world
that I can call my own.

17 I have learnt my lesson,
and given up 'me' and 'mine'.
Let me explain to you
how I gained this wisdom.

18 Even what my nose smells
does not belong to me.
I have conquered the fragrant earth,
but it does not belong to me.

19 Even the rasa my tongue tastes
does not belong to me.
I have conquered the watery world,
but it does not belong to me.

20 Even the shapes my eyes see
do not belong to me.
I have conquered the world of light,
but it does not belong to me.

21 Whatever my skin touches
does not belong to me.
I have conquered the wind-world,
but it does not belong to me.

22 The sounds my ear hears
do not belong to me.
I have conquered the world of sound,
but it does not belong to me.

23 The thoughts my mind thinks
do not belong to me.
I have conquered the mind-world,
but it does not belong to me.

24 Whatever I do,
is done for the gods,
the *pitṛ*-ancestors,
and for guests."

25 The Brahmin smiled,
and said to Janaka:
"I am Dharma,
I came here to test you.

26 I can see you are the ideal
spinner of the Wheel
whose hub is Brahma,
whose circimference is *sattva*,
whose spokes are wisdom –
the never-reversing Cakra of life!"

SECTION THIRTY-THREE

1 The Brahmin continued:
O graceful and delicate lady!
I am not the kind of man
you find so condemnable.
I am a *vipra*, a Brahmin,
a free, liberated person;
I move about in a forest;
I follow *gṛhastha*-dharma,

2 You see me as a creature
subject to pure and impure.
I am not such a being.
I am not an intimate part
of the continuous cosmos,
I transcend the temporal world.

3 I am the destroyer of creatures,
moving and unmoving.
I consume the changing world
like fire consuming wood.

4 This wisdom is my wealth.
This is the wisdom
that empowers one to rule
both earth and heaven.

5 Householder, forest-dweller,
guru-follower, alms-seeker –
no matter who you are,
there is only one path for you
if you want to be
a Brahma-knowing Brahmin.

6 So many distracting signposts!
Wisdom adores a single path.
Follow the path of the serene ātman,
ignore the bewildering multiplicity.
Let all the rushing rivers
repose in the receiving ocean.

7 This is the path of the mind,
this is not the path of the body.
Karma begins and karma ends,
the body is trapped in karma.

8 O supremely fortunate lady!
Do not fear the world to come.
Immerse yourself in what really matters,
and you will be one with my ātman.

SECTION THIRTY-FOUR

1 The Brahmin's wife said:

"My ātman is much too ordinary
and not sublime enough
to understand all that you say.
I am so bewildered –
how will my smallness
ever embrace such vastness?

2 Show me an easy way
of gaining wisdom.
I am convinced you are the one
who can truly help me."

3 The Brahmin replied:
The fire is knowlege is produced
by the operation
of the lower drilling-stick
the Brahma-*araṇī*,
the upper drilling-stick
the guru-*araṇī*,
and the stick-rubbing itself –
tapasyā and *śruti*.

4 The Brahmin's wife asked:
"This Brahma-symbol you mention,
the Kṣetrajña Field-knower –
how can it be described,
how can it be understood?"

5 The Brahmin replied:
"*Nir-liṅga*: no symbol,
nir-guṇa: no attributes,
kāraṇaṁ nāsya: no cause.
Let me tell you nonetheless
how you can grasp it.

6 A good analogy is the way
bees selflessly discover flowers.
A karma-corrupted mind
never gains true knowledge.

7 Moksa does not say:
'Do this, don't do that.'
If you want to know the atman:
'See. Hear.'

8 See and hear,
all that you can,
hundreds and thousands of them,
the visible and the invisible.

9 See and hear and absorb
the multitudinosity of life.
Experience the fragile flux
and discover the Transcendent One.

10 Śrī Bhagavān said:
This was how the mind
of the Brahmin's wife,
worried about Kṣetrajña,
attained insight
into Kṣetra the Body
and oneness with Kṣetrajña.

11 Arjuna asked:
Tell me, Krishna:
where is the Brahmin's wife,
and that bull-brave Brahmin?
Both of them found fulfilment.
Where are they, O undecaying one?

12 Śrī Bhagavān replied:
My mind is the Brahmin,
my *buddhi*-intellect
is the Brahmin's wife.
O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
The kṣetrajña Field-knower
is me: *so'aham-eva.*

SECTION THIRTY-FIVE

1 Arjuna said:
"Enlighten me more
on the supreme Brahman.
The goodness of your grace
grants me this subtle delight."

2 Vāsudeva-Krishna said:
In this connection is narrated
the historical story
of a discussion on the nature of mokṣa
between a guru and his *śisya.*

3 O foe-conqueror!
A percipient disciple approached
a strict-vowed Brahmin ācārya
who was relaxing on a mat,
and asked:
"What is the highest good?

4 I seek the highest good.
O revered one! *Bhagavan*!
I bow before you,
and I touch your feet.
I beg of you, O Brahmin:
Teach me the highest good."

5 To that *śisya*, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
the guru replied:
"I will remove all your doubts,
O twice-born one."

6 O incomparable Kaurava! *Kurusreṣṭha*!
The guru-dedicated disciple
joined his hands in *añjali*.
O mahā-minded Arjuna!
Listen to what the disciple
asked his guru:

7 "From where am I?
From where are you?
What is the highest truth?
From where comes
this teeming variety
of moving and unmoving life?

8 What gives life to creatures?
How long is their life?
What is truth, O learned *vipra*?
What is tapasyā?
What are the guṇas
praised by the virtuous?

9 What are the auspicious paths?
What is happiness?
What is ill deed?
Bhagavan! Revered one!
Suvrata! Strict-vowed one!
Instruct me in detail,

10 O saintly ṛṣi,
one by one, truthfully.
None in the world but you
can answer my questions.

11 O finest of dharma-knowers!
Quench my intense curiosity.
The whole world sings your insight
in the nature of mokṣa-dharma.

12 Who else is there
who can clear all doubts?
Trapped in the fears of saṁsāra,
we yearn for the freedom of mokṣa."

13 Vāsudeva-Krishna continued:
That guṇa-graced *śiṣya*,
tranquil-minded and humble,
who asked such pleasing questions,

14 who lived like his guru's shadow,
who was self-disciplined,
Who was like a *yati*-ascetic
and a complete brahmacārī, –
the vastly-wise and strict-vowed guru
answered all his questions,
O finest of the Kauravas,
O foe-chastising Pārtha-Arjuna.

15 The guru said:
Brahmā has answered all your questions;
and all the excelling rsis
have faithfully followed his worlds
which are enshrined in the wisdom of the Vedas
dealing with the fundamental truths.

16 To us knowledge is the highest goal,
and saṁnyāsa-renunciation
is the finest tapasyā.
He indeed is the all-attainer
who, inspired by limitless knowledge,
sees his ātman as one
with the ātmans
of all the world's beings.

17 The learned one who sees
everything in one place
and everything also everywhere,
and unity in multiplicity,
ekatva in *nānatva*,
is freed from sorrow.

18 The person who rises above
kāma-possessiveness
and *abhimān* self-importance
lives in this world
yet experiences oneness
with Brahman.

19 There is no doubt at all
that the free person is he
who knows what constitutes
the guṇas of *pradhāna*-matter,
who identifies himself
with all living beings,
who has transcended 'me' and 'mine'
and *ahaṁkāra* self-conceit.

20 Its seed the *avyakta*-unmanifest,
buddhi-intellect its trunk,
ahaṁkāra self-conceit its branches,
indriya-senses its *koṭara*-chlorophyll,

21 The five *mahā-bhūta* gross elements
its tangled branches
always leafy, always flowering,
always fragrantly fruitful,

22 Giving life to all creatures,
Brahma-bīja sanātana,
the eternal seed of Brahmā –
who grasps the truth of this tree,
and slices it clean
with the sharp sword of knowledge –

23 Such a person becomes immortal,
overcoming birth and death.
Past, present, future, and so on,
dharma-ar tha-kāma insights
whose eternal truths have been grasped
by bands of Siddhas in the past –

24 I will present before you,
O mahā-wise Arjuna.
Knowing them, the learned and the wise
attain *siddha*-fulfilment.

25 A long time ago,
learned ṛṣis, each differently brilliant,
gathered for a serious discussion:
Prajāpati-Dakṣa, Bharadvāja, Gautama,
Bhārgava-Śukra,

26 Vāsiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Viśvāmitra,
Atri and others.
They arrived at the place of discussion,
tired after long travel,

27 And, making the ṛṣi Aṅgirasa their leader,
the Brahmins approached
and had a darshan
of immaculate Brahmā.

28 The mahā-ṛṣis sat down comfortably
facing mahātmā Brahmā;
humbly they questioned him
on what was the ideal good.

29 What should be the karma
of the sādhu, the good man?
How can he escape evil?
What auspicious paths should we follow?
What is truth?
And what is ill-deed?

30 What karma takes us to the two paths –
the southern journey
and the northern journey?
What is *pralaya*-dissolution?
Apa-varga the final emancipation?
The birth and death of creatures?

31 You are my disciple, listen to me.
I will tell you
What Pra-pitāmaha Brahmā
replied to the questions
related to the *āgama*-scriptures
asked by those superlative munis.

32 "All moving and unmoving life,"
said Brahmā,
"is born from Sātya,
the Ultimate Reality.
It subsists on *tapas*,
the creative heat
of spiritual discipline.
O excellent-vowed ones!
It's their karma that decides
the quality of their birth,
the kind of yoni they descend into
or transcend.

33 Satya-Truth united with guṇa-attributes
Manifests itself in the five elements.

34 Brahma is Satya
Tapas is Satya
Prajāpati is Satya
From Satya emerges all life
This coming-and-going world
This birth-and-death *jagata*
Is a manifestation of Satya.

35 Which is why the *vipra*,
the wise, inspired and saintly,
dedicate themselves to yoga,
distance themselves from anger
and spiritual despair,
and assiduously cultivate dharma.

36 Let me now tell you
about those who abide
by the norms of good conduct,
for whom dharma becomes
a bridge from here to there,
who respect life's eternal values.

37 I will deal one by one
with the four *varṇa*-caste-divisions.
According to the wise,
dharma is one but four-footed.
Dharmam-ekaṁ catuṣpādaṁ:
This is always so.

38 O twice-born ones!
Let me come now to the path
of the auspicious and good.
This is the path
travelled by those who seek
Brahma-bhāva oneness-with-Brahman.

39 O mahā-fortune-favoured ones!
Listen now to the path
that is the finest of all
and the most difficult to tread.

40 Among the āśramas of life,
the first stepping ground
is said to be the brahmacārīs'.
The second is *gārhasthya*,
or the stage of the householder;
next is the *vānaprastha*,
or living-in-a-forest.
The supreme is the *adhyātma*,
the experience of the ātman,
the final goal of life.

41 Until the *adhyātmā* experience,
one sees only light,
ākāśa-ether, sun, wind,
Indra and Prajāpati.

42 Let me explain the details.
You must know them.
Subsisting on fruits and roots,
as munis do in a forest,

43 Is the *vānaprastha* ideal
recommended specifically
for the three twice-born castes.
The householder mode
is recommended
for all the four castes.

44 According to the wise,
śraddhā is the essence of dharma.
I have clarified for you
the god-going paths.
For the patient and the virtuous,
these can be said
to be the karma that crosses
the bridge of dharma.

45 Anyone who is strict-vowed
in the practice of dharma
and travels any of these paths
will in course of time see
how Cosmic Time Kāla is simultaneously
creator and killer of creatures.

46 Let me now clarify,
reasonably and precisely,
the different elements that constitute
the phenomena of existence.

47 The Mahā-ātmā,
The *avyakta*-unmanifest,
Ahaṁkāra-egoism,
The ten senses
(five suble and five gross),
The eleventh sense
(the mind)
The five mahā-bhūta
basic elements,

48 The distinguishing characteristics
of the five elements –
These make up the eternal reality
of the phenomenal world.
They add up to twenty-four.
with the addition
of one more – the jīva-ātmā –
a total of twenty-five.

49 Free from delusion is the marvellous man
who sees clearly
the creation and the dissolution
of these *tattva*-phenomena.

50 He enjoys the realms of purity,
he is rid of defect,
only he is fully fetter-free,
who sees lucidly
the taltvas, the guṇas, the gods
as they really are."

SECTION THIRTY-SIX

1 The unmanifest
The indistinct
The all-encompassing
The everlasting
The stable –
Becomes the *nava-dvāra pura*
the nine-gated city
with the tri-guṇa
the three guṇas
and *pañea-bhūta*
and five elements.

2 Together with the mind
it is surrounded
by the eleven
which make out different objects
as decided by the *buddhi*-intellect
which rules this ten-plus-one dominion
of three guṇas, five elements,
sense-organs, *ahaṁkāra* and *buddhi*:

3 It has three *śrota*-streams
that flow on and on
feeding the city
with the three guṇas.

4 Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva –
these are the three guṇas.
They clash with each other,
and they depend on each other.

5 They shelter in each other,
and they copy each other,
they are inextricably mixed.
These three guṇas
constitute the five elements.

6 Tamas is the *mithuna*-companion
of sattva.
Sattva is the intimate companion
of rajas.
Rajas is the companion
of sattva.
Sattva is the *mithuna*-companion
of tamas.

7 When tamas is controlled,
rajas thrives.
when rajas is controlled,
sattva thrives.

8 What needs to be known
is that the *ātmaka*-essence of tamas
is night.
It is described as *moha*-delusion
which affects all three guṇas.
It is revealed in adharma,
in the performance of evil karma.
This is the form of tamas,
by itself,
and by its influence on the other guṇas.

9 Rajas appears as prakṛti,
its *ātmaka*-nature is ceaseless activity.
This visible world
is the product of rajas,
the creator of all creatures.

10 Sattva appears in all creatures
as radiance
innocent simplicity
and *śraddhā.*
This innocent simplicity
is praised by good men.

11 Let me present before you
the basic details about the guṇas,
collectively and separately.
Listen attentively.

12 Delusion, ignorance, inability to renounce,
inability to take decisive action,
dreaminess, arrogance, fear,
greed, finding fault with good deeds,

13 Loss of memory, premature judgement,
negative thinking, mischief-mongering,
lack of discrimination, blindness,
indulgence in salacious conduct,

14 Treating non-work as work
and non-knowledge as knowledge,
anti-social activities, crookedness,
lack of *śraddhā,* stupid behaviour,

15 Sophistication, inability to comprehend,
maliciously motivated karma,
lassitude, lack of noble feelings,
absence of discipline, corruptibility –

16 All these are characteristic symptoms
of tamas-guṇa.
All the other states in this world
that are connected with delusion,

17 Can be said to be products
of tamas-guṇa.
Always blaming gods,
Brahmins, and the Vedas,

[XIV:36:18-25]

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18 Never renouncing, *abhimān*-egoism,
delusion, pride, lack of fortitude,
bitterness towards all creatures –
these are signs of tamas.

19 Performance of worthless work,
giving gifts to the undeserving,
eating what should not be eaten –
these are signs of tamas.

20 Backbiting, intolerance,
hatred, *abhīmān*-egoism,
lack of *śraddhā*–
these are signs of tamas.

21 In the category of tamas
belong all those people
who show these and similar signs,
specially value-violation.

22 Let me tell you now
of the inveterate evil-doers
who go to the lowest hells,
in the yonis of animals.

23 They became unmoving entities,
animals, beasts of burden,
flesh-eating beasts, snakes, worms,
insects, birds;

24 Egg-born creatures,
many species of quadrupeds,
insane, deaf and dumb,
disease-ridden, the polluted.

25 These are all of evil character,
their karma reveals their nature;
their journey is always downwards;
tomas-born, they are tamas-trapped.

26 Let me now explain the way
by which they can improve themselves,
and attain the realms reserved
for those with pious karma.

27 Those who are born in wombs
other than pious and virtuous,
with the help of ritual karma
and their sva-karma
that finds pleasure in good karma
and in honouring Brahma-knowers, –

28 Such people will find their life
of dedication to *saṁskāras*
an upward purifying heaven-attainment.
This is what Vedic *śruti* says.

29 There who are dedicated to the practice
of their sva-karma
will find the strength of their dharma
giving them birth
as members of the human species,
no matter how vile they were.

30 These are the ones who take birth
as the misbegotten *pāpayoni*,
as the *cāṇḍālas*, the stuttering
or the deaf and dumb,
but they succeed in slow degrees
in improving their *varṇa*-status.

31 Some strive to overcome their birth
in Śūdra-yonis
but, unable to transcend the limitations
of their tamas-guṇa,
they revolve in the ceaseless flow
of tamas-guṇa rebirth.

32 It is said that attachment to kama
is the supreme delusion.
Even the ṛṣis, the munis
and the gods themselves
are trapped in the pleasure-principles
of this mahā-*moha*.

33 Tamas-ignorance
Moha-delusion
Mahā-*moha* the supreme delusion
Krodha the anger born of tamas
The death-like attachment to tamas –
These five are fatal.
Fatal indeed is fearful *krodha.*

34 O learned *vipra*-Brahmins!
I have explained in detail
the *varṇa*, guṇa, yoni and *tattva*-nature
of tamas for your benefit.

35 Where is the man
who really sees this?
Show me the man
who really knows this!
What else is tamas
except not seeing the real?

36 These then, variously explained,
are the guṇas of tamas,
and the lower and higher forms
of birth and rebirth.
The man who understands
these guṇas of tamas
is freed from the fetters
of the guṇas of tamas.

SECTION THIRTY-SEVEN

1 O mahā-fortune-favoured ones!
I will place before you
one by one (continued the Brahmin)
the qualities of rajas-guṇa.
Listen carefully,
O excellent munis.

2 Hurting others, good looks, hyper-activity,
pleasure and pain, heat and cold,
superiority, dissension, reconciliation,
argument, disappointment, endurance;

3 Power, valour, pride, wrath,
exertion, quarrel,
jealousy, yearning, belligerence,
mamatva self-seeking, protectiveness;

4 Killing, capturing, cruelty,
buying and selling,
slicing, lopping off,
severing coat-of-mail;

5 Ferocity, butchery, slander,
exposing others' faults,
material-mindedness, anxiety,
bitterness, maligning;

6 Hypocritical speech, hypocritical giving,
doubt, indecision, boastfulness,
vilification, eulogy, praise,
commendation, muscle-power;

7 Defiance, selfish care of the needy,
self-seeking care of the elderly,
dependence on others, propriety,
rule-observance,
negligence and carelessness,
ugly gossip, possessiveness;

8 All the social rites and ceremonies
known as *saṁskāras*
that govern the everyday lives
of men and women and others,
involving their household interests
and material possessions;

9 *Saṁtāpa*-grief, disbelief,
vow-taking and ritual-observance,
selfish karma of all kinds,
pūrta public charity;

10 *Svāhā*-chanting, namaskāra-performing,
svadhā-chanting, *vaṣaṭ*-intoning,
officiating as priest at rituals,
studying for ritual sacrifices;

11 Gift-giving, gift-taking,
expiation, auspicious actions,
"This I want, this I must have" –
all such longing for things
can be said to be the product
of rajas guṇa.

12 Betrayal, māyā-trickery,
wickedness, vainglory,
theft, *hiṁsā*-violence, covering-up,
irritation, wakefulness;

13 Showing off, pride, rāga-passion,
bhakti, contentment, exultation;
gambling, confronting others,
exotic affairs with women;

14 Fondness for dancing, for songs,
and instrumental music –
all these guṇas, O Brahmins,
proceed from rajas-guṇa.

15 Those who live in the world,
meditating on past, present, and future,
who delight in the three-fold path
of dharma, artha, kāma,

16 Who, influenced by kāma,
celebrate the success of kāma
in every sphere of life –
they are rajas guṇa types;
they are the *arvāk-ṣrotas*
the downward-flowing.

17 They are the pleasure-victims
who get repeatedly
born and reborn in this world.
They seek the pleasures
of this world and the next.
They give and accept gifts,
they please the departed spirits
of their ancestors,
they make *tarpaṇa* water oblations,
they perform yajñas.

18 I have clarified the nature
and characteristics
of rajas-guṇa in detail.
Who understands this
is freed from all the fetters
associated with rajas-guṇa.

SECTION THIRTY-EIGHT

1 Let me dwell now (said the Brahmin)
on the excellent third guṇa
which works for the welfare
of all the word's creatures,
and becomes the blameless dharma
of the good and the virtuous:

2 *Ānanda*-bliss
Prīti-contentment
Udreka-nobility
Prakaśya-enlightenment
Sukha-happiness
Absence of stinginess and fear
Santoṣa-satisfaction
Predilection for śraddhā

3 *Kṣamā*-fortitude
Dhṛti-patience
Ahiṁsā-nonviolence
Samatā-impartiality
Satya-truth
Ārjava-simplicity
Absence of anger and malice
Purity
Skilfulness
Enterprise . . .

4 Knowledge is not enough
Progress is not enough
Service is enough
Effort is not enough –
A person who, yoked to dharma,
Thinks in this manner
Attains the highest goal
Attainable in the next life.

5 There is only one Sanātana Dharma
for the good and the virtuous:
selflessness, lack of *ahaṁkāra*-egoism,
freedom from expectations,
impartiality towards all,
and absence of kāma-desire.

6 Confidence, modesty, renunciation, purity, alertness,
not harming others, absence of delusion, compassion
for all creatures, refusal to malign anyone;

7 Exultation, contentment, wonder, humility,
noble conduct,
pious performance deeds leading to *śānti*-peace,
excellent *buddhi*-intelligence, freedom;

8 Non-attachment to things, brahmacarya,
giving-up of all kinds,
absence of me-and-my-ness, freedom from
expectations, dedication to dharma . . .

9 Charity is not enough
Yajña is not enough
Study is not enough
Vows are not enough
Gift-taking is not enough
Dharma is not enough
Tapasyā is not enough . . .

10 Only those Brahma-knowers of this world
who abide by these values
can be said to be the Brahma-yoni
born-Brahmins;
only they have divine darshan,
only they are wise.

11 Rid of ill-deed and despair,
these wise mortals
attain the immortal realm
and project new bodies for themselves.

12 Like the mahātmā gods
of the celestial realm,
they all-govern, they self-govern,
they refine with mind-power.

13 These are the men whose thoughts
are always soaring high;
they are the gods with power
to make and unmake.
They attain heaven, and gain power
to modify *prakṛti*-nature.

14 Whatever they want, they get,
and they enjoy what they get.
O bull-brave twice-born ones!
I have explained
the nature of sāttvika conduct.
Who understands this
obtains for his appreciation
whatever he desires.

[XIV:38:15; 39:1-6]

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15 I have explained in detail
the nature of sattva-guṇa.
The man who understands this
enjoys all the benefits
offered by the guṇas
without being fettered by them.

SECTION THIRTY-NINE

1 The Brahmin continued:
No guṇa can be isolated
from another guṇa.
Sattva, rajas and tamas
operate in a state
of indissoluble togetherness.

2 They are connected to each other.
They are inter-dependent.
They support each other.
They follow each other.

3 Where sattva is, rajas is.
That goes without saying.
Whose tamas is, sattva and rajas
are also. So they say.

4 Their yātrā is together,
they move about as a group.
Acting impulsively or deliberately,
they are always united.

5 Nonetheless, they do differ
in the way they develop,
and I will now deal
with their growth and decline.

6 Tamas exists in excess
among the *tiryag* lower species,
and they have less of rajas
and much less of sattva.

7 Among the middle order species,
rajas exists in excess;
there is little of tamas
and very little of sattva.

8 In the superior species,
there is excess of sattva,
very little of tamas,
and even less of rajas.

9 Sattva is the yoni giving birth
to modifications of the senses.
It shines through them.
No dharma excels sattva-guṇa.

10 The sāttvika go up,
the rajasika stay in the middle,
the tāmasika, low and mean,
go down.

11 In the Śūdra, tamas;
in the Kṣatriya, rajas;
in the Brahma-knower, sattva:
three guṇas classify the three *varṇas.*

12 From a distance these three guṇas
are always seen together;
they are never seen as isolated
from each other.

13 See the rising sun!
Mischief-makers fear it,
travellers get oppressed
by the increasing heat.

14 The sun is sattva,
the mischief makers tamas;
the heat affecting the travellers
is rajas.

15 The light of the sun is sattva,
the heat of the sun is rajas,
the sun eclipsed on *parva*-days
is tamas.

16 These are the guṇas
in all radiant bodies.
They manifest and project themselves
in a variety of ways.

17 Tamas dominates unmoving life.
Rajas is revealed
in ceaseless change and evolution.
Sattva is revealed
in *sneha*-bhāva sensitivity
and oleaginosity.

18 The day is three-fold,
the night is three-fold,
as are fortnights, mouths, years
seasons, and *saṁdhyā*-times

19 Gifts are three-fold,
yajñas are three-fold,
three-fold the worlds, the gods,
three fold is knowledge,
and three-fold is the path
of life's journey.

20 Three-guṇa-propertied also
are past, present and future,
dharma, artha and kāma,
praṇa, *apāna* and *udāna* life-breaths.

21 The world's teeming phenomena
is three-guṇa-filled.
The three guṇas are everywhere,
in everything; at all times.

22 Always, everywhere the three guṇas
operating unmanifested.
They are eternally created:
sattva, rajas and tamas.

23 Tamas-dark
Vyakta-manifested
Śiva-auspicious
Dhāma-resting place
Rajas-energy
Yoni-womb
Sanātana-eternal
Prakṛti-nature
Vikāra-evolving
Pralaya-dissolution
Pradhāna-supreme
Prabhava-producing
Apyaya-absorbing

24 *Anudrika* -undeveloped
Anūna-not miniscule
Acala -unshaking
Dhruva -stable
Sat-asat-is-and-not-is
Avyakta-unmanifested
Triguṇa-three-guṇa-reality
– These are some of the names
which should be known by all
who meditate on the Adhyātmā
or the Ultimate Reality.

25 The person who knows
as they should be known
these names of the unmanifest
and the nature of the guṇas,
and the pure goals
that need to be attained –
such a person is freed
of the fetters of the flesh,
and, guṇa-liberated,
he experiences perfect freedom.

[XIV:40:1-5]

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SECTION FORTY

1 In the beginning
from the unmanifested
emerged Mahānātmā
Mahā-mati –
the Source of all guṇas –
the first creation.

2 Mahān-Ātmā
Mati
Viṣṇu
Jiṣṇu
Śambhu
Vīryavān
Buddhi
Prajñā
Upalabdhi
Khyāti
Dhṛti
Smṛti

3 These are the synonyms
for Mahānātmā.
knowing this, a learned Brahma-knower
dispels all delusion.

4 Everywhere
are its hands and feet,
everywhere its ears.
It pervades the universe.

5 Mahā-powerful
it exists in the hearts of all –
Infinitesimality
Incredible Lightness
Glorious Fulfilment –
The Supreme Lord of all
The Self-Effulgent One
The Undecaying Reality

6 And all who know
the nature of intelligence
And all who work
for the glory of goodness
And all who practise
the art of meditation
And all who always
are devoted to yoga
And all who pursue
the path of truth
And all who discipline
the pull of their senses

7 Those who cherish
the way of knowledge
And those who are free
from the clutches of greed
And those who have crushed
the root of their anger
And those whose hearts
are rich with contentment
And those who are blessed
with the gift of wisdom
And those who overcome
me-ness and my-ness
And those unaffected
by *ahaṁkāra*-egoism –

8 They are all liberated –
they attain the glory
known as Mahatva.
The person who knows
the Ātmana Mahata
attains the Pure Fulfilment.

9 From *ahaṁkāra* emerged the five mahā-elements:
earth, air, *ākāśa*-ether, water, and – the fifth – light.

10 It is the operation
of the five mahā-elements –
sound, touch, shape, rasa, smell –
that perplexes and deludes people.

11 O wise ones!
When the time comes
for the dissolution
of the five mahā-elements,
mahā-fear grips
all living beings.

12 The self-realised man
is the only one
among all creatures
who overcomes delusion.
Self-born Viṣṇu becomes
the Lord of new creation.

13 Who know that the Lord,
the Ancient Puruṣa,
hides in the cave of the heart,
The Viśva-Rūpa
World-Formed Divinity,
the Golden Divinity,
the Ultimate Goal
of the illumined-with-insight, –
that *buddhimān*-man
knows the nature of the Lord
and transcends the limits
of his own *buddhis*

SECTION FORTY-ONE

1 The Brahmin continued:
The first creation Mahān
is Ahaṁkāra.
When it became Ahaṁ
or I, it was known
as the second creation.

2 *Ahaṁkāra* is the origin
of all creatures, so they say.
It is *tejas* rediant energy,
it is *cetana*-consciousness
All phenomena evolve
from it, variously;
it is creature-supporting Prajā-sarga,
it is Lord-of-creatures Prajāpati.

3 It is a deva
a deity
It is a creator
of deities
It is the creator
of mind
It is the creator
of the three worlds
This world is all ahaṁ-I –
so they say.

4 For the munis fulfilled in the experience
of knowledge of the Adhyātmā,
for the munis who meditate
on the nature of the ātman,
for the munis who study successfully
the sacred scriptures,
this is the realm to dwell in –
Sanātana-loka, the eternal world.

5 It is through *ahaṁkara*
that one enjoys the guṇas
which are created by *ahaṁkara*,
the creator of all creatures.
All change and variety
evolve from *ahaṁkara*.
The radiance of *ahaṁkara*
illuminates the universe.

[XIV:42:1-7]

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SECTION FORTY-TWO

1 The Brahmin continued:
From *ahaṁkāra* emerged the five mahā-elements:
earth, air, *ākāśa*-ether, water, and – the fifth – light.

2 It is the operation
of the five maha-elements –
sound, touch, shape, rasa, smell –
that perplexes and deludes people.

3 O wise ones!
When the time comes
for the dissolution
of the five mahā-elements,
mahā-fear grips
all living beings.

4 Every thing dissolves
into what created it.
Every thing reverts
to what it was originally.
Each is reborn from each
again and again.

5 All things moving and unmoving
dissolve in this way,
but the wise who are gifted
with the wealth
of *smṛtim-anta* memory-without-end –
they do not dissolve.

6 Because sound, touch shape, rasa,
and smell – the fifth –
are effects, they are impermanent.
They confuse and delude.

7 They are transient, they are nothing.
They are products of greed,
they are all the same,
they feed on flesh and blood,
they survive by depending
desperately on each other;

8 They exist outside the ātman,
they are helpless and hopeless.
Prāṇa, apānā, udāna,
samāna and *vyāna* –

9 These five life-breaths are linked
always with the *antarātmā.*
with *vāk*-speech, *manas*-mind, *buddhi*-intellect,
they comprise an aggregate
of eight ingredients that constitute
this evolving evolving *jagata*-world.

10 Skin, nose, ear, eyes, tongue, speech –
all these disciplined, and the mind pure,
buddhi-intellect not straying from reality,

11 Mind not scorched by the eight fires
of the senses – such a person attains
the unsurpassed auspicious *śubhaṁ* Brahman.

12 O twice-born ones!
Let me now deal specially
with the eleven senses
that are said to emerge from *ahaṁkāra*:

13 The ear
the skin
the two eyes
the tongue
the nose – the fifth –
the two feet
the anus
the sexual organ
the two hands
and speech – the tenth –

14 These are the sense-organs
with mind as the eleventh.
Conquer them.
Let Brahman shine in you!

15 Five of these senses
are associated with *buddhi*-intellect,
and five are associated
with karma.
The five that start with the ear
are *buddhi* -connected.

16 The others not associated with karma
cannot be clearly classified.
The mind belongs to both groups.
Buddhi – the twelfth – surpasses all.

17 These then are the eleven senses
enumerated in the eight order.
To know this is the finest fulfilment
of leasoned paṇḍits.

18 Let me proceed now
to list the sense-organs
First: *ākāśa*-ether. The ear,
which is *adhyātman*-associated.

19 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is sound-things.
Its *adhidaivata* : the *diśā*-quarters.
Second: wind. The skin,
which is *adhyātman*-associated.

20 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is touch-things.
Its *adhidavata*: touch.
Third: light. The eye,
which is *adhyātman*-associated.

21 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is shape-things.
Its *adhidavata.* the sun.
Fourth: water. The tongue,
which is *adhyātman*-associated.

22 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is rasa-things.
Its *adhidaivata*: Soma the moon.
Fifth: earth. The nose,
which is *adhyātman*-associated.

23 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is fragrance-things.
Its *adhidavata*: wind.
In this way have been described
the five groups in sets of three.

24 Let me now go in detail
about the other senses.
Brahma-knowers gifted with darshan
of factual reality
declare that the two feet
are *adhyātman*-associated.

25 *Abhibhūta*-associated, they are motion.
Their *adhidavata*: Viṣṇu.
The *apāna* life-breath,
downward-moving,
adhyātman-associated,
is called the anus.

26 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is excreta,
ejected waste-matter.
Its *adhidaivata*-Mitra.
Adhyātman-associated
is the sexual organ,
the producer of all creatures.

27 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is *śukra*-semen.
Its *daivata* presiding deity: Prajāpati.
Those who know about the *adhyātman*
say the two hands are *adhyātman*-associated.

28 *Adhibhūta*-associated, they are karma.
. Their *adhidaivata*: Śakra-Indra.
Next : *adhyātman*-associated is Vāk,
the Viśva-devī goddess of speech.

29 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is what's spoken.
Its *adhidaivata*: Vahni-Agni:
Adhyātman-associated is the mind
which energises the five elements.

30 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is *saṁkalpa*-thoughts.
Its *adhidavata*: Candramā the moon.
Adhyātman-associated is Ahaṁkāra,
the *sarva-saṁsāra-kāraka*,
the cause of all the worldliness
of our same-serum existence.

31 *Adhibhūta*-associated, it is abhiman,
awareness of individual existence.
Its *adhidavaita*: Rudra-Śiva.
Adhyātman-associated
is *buddhi*, the discriminating intelligence
which energises the six senses.

32 *Adhibhūta*-associated,
it is what one understands.
Its *adhidavata* is Brahmā.
There are only three places
where creatures can survive;
there is no fourth.

33 Land, water, *ākāśa*-ether.
There are four forms of birth:
egg-born, seed-born,
sweat-born, womb-born.

34 All generation of living creatures
falls in these four categories.
There are other ceatures also
including the sky-rangers –

35 They are all egg-born,
along with crawling serpents.
A fifth are filth-born insects,
and similar forms of life.

36 This is the second kind of birth,
and treated as inferior.
Creatures that gradually emerge
out of the earth

37 Are said, O excellent twice-born ones,
to be seed-born.
Two or many-footed creatures,
and creatures with unsteady gait,

38 Or creatures deformed and disfigured,
are womb-born.
O *sattamā*! O finest of men!
You should know
that the eternal Brahmā-yoni
is of two kinds –

39 Tapasyā and meritorious karma.
So the learned declare.
Karma is many-faceted:
ritual sacrifice, gift-giving,

40 And pious study of sacred texts.
Wise elders have ordained this.
O bull-brave twice-born ones!
The disciplined yogi who knows this

41 Is freed from all the fetters
of his ill-deeds.
I have placed before you
the truths of Adhyātman.

42 O you who are learned-in-dharma!
The truly knowledgeable
are those who have this knowledge.
Understand well the senses,
the objects of the senses,
and the five mahā-elements,
and cultivate the discipline
that keeps them in control.

43 When the mind takes over,
janma-sukha worldly pleasures fade
According to the rich in knowledge,
this is the truest happiness.

44 I shall now speak of something
both subtle and holy,
simultaneously gentle and awesome,
which is present in all creatures.

45 The essence of all happiness
is the guṇa-less guṇa,
the detached attachment,
the living-alone totality,
the never-seeing any differences.
This is Brahma-felicity.

46 Blessed is the learned man
who, like the tortoise
pulling in its limbs,
pulls within his kāma-desires
and, everywhere free,
is everlastingly happy.

47 Controlling his kāma
with his ātman,
and quenching the thirst
of his yearnings,
and becoming the good-heart friend
of all the world's creatures,
he prepares himself
for absorption in Brahman.

48 Disciplining his senses
which yearn for their objects,
avoiding crowded places,
he dazzles with the radiance
of a person inspired
by the fire of Adhyātman.

49 Feed a fire with fuel,
and it flames fiercely.
Tame the senses with discipline,
and the Mahānātmā shines radiant.

50 When the serene ātman
experiences every thing
in the totality of its heart,
then one experiences
the subflest of the subtle,
the unexcelled excellence.

51 Fire its form
Blood its water
Wind its touch
Filth-filled earth
its mind-container
Ākāśa-ether its ear . . .

52 Disease-and-sorrow ridden
Swirling in five whirlpools
which are the five elements
Nine-doored with nine body-openings
Two-devatāed with Jīva and Īśvara . . .

53 Redolent-with-rajas
Unfit to be seen
Three-guṇa-fabricated
Three-elements-containing
(wind, bile, phlegm)
Enraptured with attachments
Stupefied entity –
Such is the body . . .

54 How difficult it is for the body
to survive in this world!
Yet it depends on *sattva*-values
and succeeds in surviving!
What else is this but Kāla-cakra
the ever-evolving
the ever-revolving
the Wheel of Cosmic Time!

55 What a mahā-ocean it is!
A fierce and unfathomable ocean!
An ocean of delusion!
It expands!
It contracts!
It wakes up the universe
along with the gods!

56 By disciplining the senses
and controlling kāma, anger, fear,
greed, enmity and falsehood,
one learns to give up
all the negative qualities
that are so difficult to give up.

57 The person who in this world
is able to control
the three guṇas and the five elements
of the body
attains the highest status –
anantyaṁ-limitlessness.

58 Conquer your kāma.
Conquer your anger.
Cross the river
Whose banks are the five senses
Whose billows are the mind's yearnings
Whose whirlpool is delusion.

59 With the mind
minding his mind
Freed from all the fetters
of his faults
With his ātman
inseeing his ātman
Such a person finds
the final fulfilment.

60 He knows all there is to know.
He sees all creatures in his ātman
and the ātman in all creatures.
They are one
And they are many
They are now this
And they are now that.

61 They are a hundred lights
from a single flame –
this is what he sees.
He is Viṣṇu and Mitra
He is Varuṇa and Agni
He is Prajāpati.

62 He is Dhātā-Vidhātā
the Maker and the Supporter
He is the *Sarvatomukha-prabhu*
the everywhere-facing Lord
He is the *Mahānātman*
He is the heart of all creatures
He shines with a divine dazzle.

63 All the *vipra*-saints
the gods and antigods
the yakṣas and *piśācas*
the *pitṛs* and birds
rākṣasas and *bhūtas*
all the mahā-ṛṣis –
they sing his *stuti*-praise.

SECTION FORTY-THREE

1 The Brahmin continued:
The middle guṇa of rajas
graces the rājā Kṣatriya
in the community of humans.
In carriers, the elephant;
in forest-dwellers
the lion;

2 In animals, the sheep;
in hole-dwellers, the snake;
in cattle, the bull;
among females, the mule.

3 The *nyāgrodha*, the *jambu*,
the *pippala*, the *śālmali*,
the *śiṁśapa*, the *meṣaśṛṅga*,
the *kīcaka*-bamboo –

4 There is no doubt at all –
are the rājās among trees.
The Himavat, Pariyātrā, Sahya,
Vindhya, Trikūṭavat,

5 The Śveta, Nīla, Bhāsa,
Koṣṭhavat mountains,
Guruskandha, Mahendra,
and the Mālyavat range

6 Are the rājās of mountains,
as the Maruts are of Gaṇas,
the sun of the *graha*-planets,
the moon of constellations.

7 Yama is the lord of *pitṛs*,
the ocean of rivers,
Varuṇa is the rājā of waters,
Indra of the Maruts.

8 Arka is the rājā of flaming bodies,
Indu of the shining stars,
Agni is ever the lord of elements,
Bṛhaspati of Brahmins.

9 Soma is the lord of herbs,
Viṣṇu of the supremely powerful,
Tvaṣṭā is the rājā of the Rudras,
Śiva the *īśvara* of creatures.

10 Yajña is supreme among sacrifices,
Maghavat-Indra among the gods,
the north is of directions
and Soma is the rājā of *vipras*.

11 Kubera is lord of precious gems,
Puraṁdara-Indra of the gods.
These are the lords of entities,
Prajāpati the lord of people.

12 I am the mahān-foremost of all,
I am Brahma-become!
There is none who excels me
or Viṣṇu.

13 Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is Brahma-become,
is the rājā of rājās:
know him to be *īśvara*-lord,
the Creator, the uncreated Hari.

14 He is the *īśvara*-lord
of men and Kinnaras,
Yakṣas and Gandharvas and rākṣasas,
gods and Dānavas and Nāgas.

15 Desire-driven men are attracted
by Mahādevī Maheśvarī,
the lovely-eyed goddess,
also named Pārvatī.

16 Loveliest of ladies
and most gracious of women
is Pārvatī-Umā devī.
Among pleasure-providing ladies,
the finest are the apsarās
whose beauty is radiant.

17 Rājās have kāma-desire for dharma,
Brahmins are bridges to dharma,
and that is the reason a rājā
should always protect the twice-born.

18 When good subjects suffer in a kingdom,
the rājā loses
the guṇas of his royalty.
When he dies,
he goes to the *preta*-realm
of the lower beings.

19 When good subjects prosper in a kingdom,
the rājā rejoices in this world
and, dying, enjoys happiness
in the next world.

20 O bull-brave twice-born!
Those mahātmās find final fulfilment.
Let me now explain to you
the characteristics of dharma.

21 Ahiṁsā is the supreme dharma,
violence is a sign of adharma.
Radiance characterises the gods,
karma characterises human beings.

22 Sound characterises *ākāśa*-ether,
touch characterises wind,
shape characterises shining bodies,
rasa-taste characterises water.

23 Fragrance is the characteristic
of all-creature-encompassing earth,
svara-melody and *vyañjana*-implication
characterise speech.

24 Thought characterises mind,
and also of *buddhi*-discrimination.
What the mind thinks is refined
by *buddhi*-discrimination.

25 These can be no doubt at all
that the *buddhi* determines comprehension.
Dhyāna-meditation characterises mind.
Avyakta-anonymity,
the invisibility of personality,
characterises the good man.

26 Activity characterises yoga,
knowledge characterises renunciation.
Revering knowledge,
a wise man practises *saṁnyāsa*-giving up.

27 Yoked-to-knowledge,
the *saṁnyāsi* who practises giving up,
who transcends life's ambivalence
and *dvandva*-duality,
including tamas, death, and decay,
attains the final fulfilment.

28 I have explained to you
the characteristics of dharma.
Let me now explain to you
how to grasp each guṇa.

29 The fragrance of earth
is grasped by the nose;
the wind in the nose
assists in this process.

30 The rasa of water
is grasped by the tongue;
Soma in the tongue
assists in this process.

31 The guṇa of a shining body
is shape, grasped by the eye.
Āditya in the eye
assists in this process.

32 The touch of wind
is grasped by the skin;
the breath in the skin
assists in this process.

33 The guṇa of *ākāśa*-ether is sound,
grasped by the ears;
The quarters living in the ear
assist in this process.

34 The guṇa of the mind is thought,
grasped by *prajña*-wisdom;
Cetanā-consciousness, residing in the heart,
assists in this process.

35 *Buddhi*-intelleck is grasped by will-power,
and *mahān*-magnificence
is grasped by *jñāna*-knowledge.
There is no doubt at all
that the *avyakta*-unperceived abstract
grasp the *vyakta*-perceived phenomenon.

36 Nirguṇa Kṣetrajña,
the guṇa-less knower-of-the-body
has no *liṅga*, no sign, no symbol
that describes its *ātmaka*-essence.
Because it has no symbols,
its characteristic is pure knowledge.

37 The unmanifest-*avyakta* resides
in the *kṣetra*-body field
in which guṇas are made and unmade.
Concealed in it am I,
I am the one who sees,
and hears, and knows.

38 Puruṣa knows it,
so Puruṣa is called Kṣetrajña,
the knower-of-the-field.
The knower-of-the-field
insees the activity of the guṇas
and the inaction of the guṇas.

39 The endlessly created guṇas,
lacking *cetana*-consciousness
do not know their nature.
They are manufactured phenomena,
they have a beginning,
a middle and an end.

40 Only the Ksetrajña and none else,
only the knower-of-the-field
experiences the Paraṁ Mahat,
the Supreme Magnificence
which transcends the guṇas
and all guṇa-born phenomena.

41 The knower-of-dharma
The guṇa-renouncer
The renouncer of *sattva*-phenomena
cancels his weakneses
transcends the guṇas
and experiences the Kṣetrajña.

42 The knower-of-dharma
The guṇa-renouncer
The renouncer of *sattva*-phenomena
cancels his weaknesses
transcends the guṇas
and experiences the Kṣetrajña.

43 *Nir-dvandva*
Duality-free
Nir-namaskāra
Formality-free
Niḥ-svāhākāra
Rid-of-rituals
Acala-unshakable
Aniketana-homeless
He is the Kṣetrajña.
The Knower-of-the-body
He is Paro Vibho
The Radiance Immeasurable.

SECTION FORTY-FOUR

1 The Brahmin continued:
Let me now tell you about
that has beginning, middle and end,
that has name and symbole,
and how it can be grasped.

2 First came day, then night.
So it is said.
The *śukla* bright fortnight first,
then the remaining month.
Śravaṇa first in the constellations,
Śiśira-dew first among seasons.

3 Earth is the source of fragrances,
water of all rasas,
Āditya the source of all shapes,
wind of touch-sensations.

4 *Ākāśa*-ether is the source of sounds.
These are the guṇas of the elements.
Let me now list the first
and the finest of the elements.

5 The sun is the first of shining bodies,
fire the first of the elements,
Sāvitrī first of all *vidyā*-learning,
Prajāpati first among the gods.

6 Auṁkāra is the first of the Vedas,
prāṇa-life-breath of winds,
Sāvitrī the first of sacred chants –
so it is said.

7 The Gāyatrī is the first of metres,
the goat of sacrificial animals,
Cows the first of all quadrupeds,
the twice-born among humans.

8 The hawk is the first of birds,
ghee-pouring the first of oblations,
and serpents the first of reptiles,
O excellent twice-born ones!

9 The Kṛta is the first among yugas,
there is no doubt of this.
Gold is the first of precious metals,
barley the first among grains.

10 Food is first of what's eaten or swallowed,
so it is said.
Water is first of all liquids
that are drunk.

11 The everlasting sacred field of Brahmā
known as Plākṣa
is said to be unquestionably the first
among unmoving objects.

12 Among Prajāpatis I am the first,
there is no doubt of this.
Above me is Svayambhu Self-Born Viṣṇu,
the inconceivable-ātmaned Divinity.

13 Mahā-Meru is the first-born of mountains,
so it is said.
Of the directions and sub-directions,
the east is the first-born.

14 Three-path-flowing Gaṅgā is said
to be the first-born of rivers,
and the ocean is the first-born
of all waters-bodies.

15 Īśvara is the *prabhu*-lord
of gods and Dānava antigods,
bhūtas, *piśācas*, *uraga*-serpents, rākṣasas,
and humans and Kinnaras and Yakṣas.

16 There is none in the three worlds
to equal Mahā-Viṣṇu;
the Brahma-maya Brahma-become
Creator of the Cosmos.

17 Of the *āśrama* resting-stages of life,
definitely the householder's is the first.
The Unmanifest is the beginning of the worlds
and the end of everything.

18 When the sun sets, the body ends;
when the sun rises, night ends.
The end of pleasure is always pain,
the end of pain is always pleasure.

19 All possessions end in dispossession,
whatever rises must fall,
all bonding ends in breaking,
all life ends in death.

20 All constructs get deconstructed,
what is born is sare to die,
fleeting in this world is the life
of the moving and the unmoving.

21 Yajña, gift, tapasyā,
study, vow, ritual –
all are doomed to destrict.
Only knowledge is indestrict.

22 Only the one with a serene ātman,
only the sense-disciplined person,
only the transcender of "me-and-mine",
only he with no *ahaṁkāra*,
is freed from the fetters of ill-deed
by the light of pure knowledge.

SECTION FORTY-FIVE

1 *Buddhi*-intellect its vitality
Mind its pole
The senses its fetters
The five mahā-elements its nave
Home its circumference . . .

2 Decay and despair
and disease and doom
its destination . . .
Time and place
its habitation
and toil its noise . . .

3 Day and night
the rotations
of its wheel . . .
Caught in the maṇḍala
of heat and cold . . .
Pleasure and pain
its connecting rods . . .
Hunger and thirst
the fixing nails . . .

4 Light and shadow
the ruts on the road . . .
It moves as swiftly
as the blink of an eyelid . . .
It is deluged
with dreadful delusion . . .
It is always revolving
always evolving
without discrimination . . .

5 Its measuring-rod:
months and fortnights . . .
Never the same,
always travering the universe . . .
up and down in the slushy terrain
of tapasyā and dedication . . .
energised always
by the velocity
of rajas-passions . . .

6 Guided by the light
of mahā-ahaṁkāra
enormous egoism . . .
nourished by the gunas . . .
problems the belts
that hold it tight . . .
revolving ceaselessly
in a circle
of despair and doom . . .

7 Actions
and causes of actions . . .
Massive the raga-passion
that drives it farward . . .
Greed and possessiveness
make it unsteady . . .
It is fabricated
from the warp and woof
of variegated ignorance.

8 It is filled
with fear and delusion
and it causes the delusion
of all creatures in it . . .
It seeks bliss and pleasure
and all it gets
is kāma and anger.

9 Crafted from the stuff
of primeval Mahad
with the finishing touches
given of gross attachments
it endlessly revolves
and endlessly dissolves . . .
This is the Kāla-cakra
the Wheel of Cosmic Time
mind-swift mind-limited.

10 This is the Kāla-cakra
locked in duality
devoid of consciousness
and undiscriminating . . .
This is the Wheel of Time
that is required
by the very gods
to be confronted,
challenged and rejected.

11 Only he of all creatures
is never deluded
who knows exactly
the whirling velocity
and manner of cessation
of this Kāla-cakra.

12 He finds the final fulfilment,
freed of his ill-deeds,
devoid of *dvandva*-duality,
liberated from *saṁskāra*-duties.

13 The householder
The brahmacārī
The forest-dweller
The mendicant –
Four *āśramas* of life . . .
The root of these four
Is the householder.

14 What is this world for
if not the observance
of the sacred *āgama* texts?
Everlasting welfare
is the result of respecting
the *āgama* rules.

15 Purified by *saṁskāra*-observance,
disciplined in his vows,
a highborn guṇa-knowing novice
should return to domestic life.

16 Devoted to his wife,
living a life of character,
disciplining his senses,
inspired by *śraddhā*,
he should perform
the five mahā-yajñas.

17 Let him eat what remains
after feeding the gods and guests;
let him perform the Vedic rites;
let him at these sacrifices
give away in charity happily
whatever he can afford.

18 He is the *śiṣṭa* man of character
who is always engaged
with his hands and feet and eyes,
who is sparing of speech like a muni.

19 He should always wear
the *yajñopavīta* sacred thread,
dress in clean clothes,
observe pure vows,
mix with the noble
and remain disciplined.

20 Let him discipline his sex-urge
and the demands of his stomach,
this man of compassion and character.
Let him learn to go about
with the help of a bamboo-staff
and a *kamaṇḍalu* pot.

21 Let him carry three such pots:
one for *ācamana* mouth-rinsing,
the second for washing his feet,
the third for ablutions.

22 Having studied,
he should teach others,
and officiate at sacrifices
and offer his own sacrifices,
and give and receive gifts.
These six determine character.

23 Three of these determine
the livelihood of Brahmins:
teaching, officiating at sacrifices,
and taking gifts from the pure-minded.

24 The other three karmas –
giving gifts, studying,
and yajña-performance –
are associated with dharma.

25 A dharma-knower
should never be chary
about these three deeds:
self-control,
compassion for all,
forebearance of all.

26 The pious Brahmin
who with a pure heart
practises the domestic life
as best as he can
succeeds in attaining
the realm of heaven.

SECTION FORTY-SIX

1 The Brahmin continued:
Walking on the path I have explained,
to the best of his ability,
pursuing his chosen dedication
as a brahmacārī,

2 Delighting in his sva-dharma
of self-preservation,
the learned muni,
the controller of his senses,
happily serving his guru,
steady in *satya*-dharma, pure,

3 Should eat with his guru's permission,
and never find fault
with what he is eating.
Let the alms he receives
be the sanctified *haviṣya* he eats,
and let him always prefer
to sit in the same place,
and exercise regularly.

4 Twice a day with a pure mind
let him pour libations
in the sacred fire.
Let him move about
always with the support
of a *bilva* or *palāśa* staff.

5 The robe of the twice-born
should be of linen or cotton,
or he should wear deerskin;
or, alternatively, any ochre dress.

6 A girdle of *mūñja*-grass,
matted hair, daily baths,
the sacred thread, Vedic study,
forsaking of greed, strict vows . . .

7 Praiseworthy is the disciplined brahmacārī
who pleases the gods
with *tarpaṇa*-offerings of water
as ordained by tradition.

8 Sublimating his semen-energy
by indrawing *ūrdhava-retā*,
with yoga-power
controlling his senses,
this is the world-conqueror
who attains fulfilment
and never takes birth again
in the world of *saṁsāra*.

9 Purified by perfect performance
of the *saṁskāra*-rituals,
practising brahmacarya self-control,
let him give up home-attachment
and move out of his village
and live in a nearby forest.

10 Clad in deerskin or tree-bark,
let him bathe there
in the morning and evening.
Let the forest be his home.
Let him never again
return to his village.

11 Let him receive guests hospitably
and honour them generously,
and himself subsist on *śyāmaka*
roots, shoots and fruits.

12 Let him survive on the air,
the running water
and other benefits of forest-life.
Let him keep in mind
the vows he has taken,
and organise his life accordingly.

13 Any guest should be received
with alms of fruits and roots.
Never any laziness or hesitation:
Whatever food is available
should be placed as an offering
before the guest.

14 Let him feed first
the gods and his guest;
then, observing the vow of silence,
let him himself eat.
He should eat little,
and be grateful to the gods.

15 Disciplined, compassionate, forebearing,
let him grow a moustache and beard.
Performing sacrifices and studying sacred texts,
he should excel in *satya*-dharma.

16 Pure of body, skilful and alert,
the single-minded forest-dweller,
devoted to yoga, a *vānaprastha* solitary,
will become a conqueror of heaven.

17 Be *gṛhastha* householder
Be *brahmacarya* discipliner-of-the-senses
Be *vānaprastha* forest-dwelling renouncer –
If you seek mokṣa
you must follow the path
of immaculate character.

18 Assuming fearlessness to all creatures,
giving up selfish karma,
he should work for the welfare of all;
he should be a muni
who has perfectly disciplined his senses
and radiates all-embracing goodness.

19 Subsisting on alms received
without asking and without trouble,
he should always go to a house
where no smoke is visible
and whose inhabitants
have already eaten;

20 And they have finished the chore
of washing the utensils.
Then the seeker of mokṣa
should ask for alms.
He should never expect more,
never be unhappy with less.

21 Let him ask for no more
than meets his need,
and ask only at the right time.
Let him not yearn
to possess even basic comforts.
Let him stay away
from a place where a meal
is given with lavish pūjā-praise.

22 Let the mendicant shun any gain
that comes with pūjā-praise
He should not eat another's leftovers,
nor bitter, acrid, and pungent food.

23 He should also avoid food
that is *madhura*-rasa, excessivly sweet.
He should eat only as much
as he needs to survive.

24 The person who understands mokṣa
should not increase his own convenience
by diminishing another's livelihood.
When on his rounds for alms,
he must never desire any food
other than what is offered to him.

25 Let him never flaunt his dharma.
Committed to simplicity,
he should prefer a secluded spot,
a foot of a tree, a river,

26 Or a mountain cave, for shelter.
He should never pass
more than one summer night in a village,
in the monsoon
he should prefer to shelter
in the same place.

27 Let him move about so long
as the sun shines;
let his gait be slow and steady,
like a crawling insect.
Let him feel for all creatures,
let him keep his eyes on the road.

28 Let him not run after possessions,
let him not seek
the sentimental security of friends.
The mokṣa-knower
should see to it that he uses
only safe and pure water.

29 He should always perform ablutions
with freshly collected water.
Ahiṁsā, brahmacarya, truth, simplicity,

30 Absence of anger, absence of ill-will,
self-control, never indulging in calumny, –
these are the eight vows that need
to be rigorously practised by the disciplined man.

31 Never wicked deed, never crooked deed,
his character is straightforward.
Let him eat whatever he gets,
without desiring even that.

32 Let him always eat just enough
to survive, no more.
Let him relish dharma-obtained food,
not lust after delicacies.

33 Never should he accept anything
other than food and clothes.
He should accept only as much
as he can eat, no more.

34 No making of gifts,
and no taking of gifts.
In a world of need,
there is no place for greed.

35 He should never appropriate
what belongs to another,
never take anything
without asking for it,
never get so attached to any thing
as to miss its absence.

36 Let him make use – if he so wishes –
of earth, water, stones,
leaves, fruits and flowers,
should he need them –
if they are no one's property,
and freely available.

37 Never become a professional worker,
never hanker for gold.
Hate none, advise none,
shun possessions.

38 Eat only *śrāddhā*-purified food.
Stay away from dogmatic debates.
Let your character be nectar-sweet.
Free yourself from attachments.
Do not get sentimentally involved
with any living being.

39 Never do, or get done,
any deed that expects return
or injures anyone
or brings excessive wealth.

40 Rejecting all consumer comforts,
satisfied with a minimum,
one should lead a life
of impartial affection
for all the world's creatures,
moving and unmoving.

41 Never irritate another,
never get irritated by another.
The mokṣa-knower is he
who is trusted by all.

42 Give up thinking of the past,
do not worry about the future,
be indifferent to the present.
Flow with Kāla-time, serenely.

43 Never corrupt anything
with eye, mind, or speech.
Never do any mischief,
openly or secretly.

44 Master the world of things
with disciplined senses,
with a balanced *buddhi*;
withdraw your senses,
like the tortoise
pulling in its limbs.

45 *Nir-dvandva*
Duality-free
Nir-namaskāra
Formality-free
Niḥ-svāhākāra
Rid-of-rituals
Nir-mamaḥ
Free-of-me-and-mine
Nir-ahaṁkara
Released-from-egoism
He has transcended yoga –
He has discovered himself!
Nir-yoga-kṣema ātmanām.

46 Not having expectations
from guṇa-laden things,
tranquil, rid of attachments,
not depending on anyone,
your ātman your only companion,
seeing facts as they really are,
you become free.
There is no doubt of this.

47 Without hands, feet and back
Without head and stomach
Without any guṇa-karma
Perfect and pure and permanent

48 Without smell
rasa
touch
shape
sound
Which can be intuitively experienced
Which is unattached to things
Which is without flesh

49 Which is free of anxieties
Which is imperishable and divine
Which is in the hearts of all
When you see that atman
which is in all creatures
Then you have conquered death.

50 It is beyond the *buddhi*
beyond the senses
beyond the gods
It is beyond the Vedas
beyond yajñas
beyond the worlds
beyond tapasyā
beyond vows.

51 Those who know
say it can be experienced
only without symbols
which is why the essence
of dharma should be seen
as having no symbol.

52 The learned householder
should abide by practical knowledge.
Undeluded, let him practise dharma
like a person who is deluded,
without finding fault
with the dharma he practises.

53 He should do only such work
as does not earn disrespect,
and disregard the consequences,
but in doing so
let him take care not to belittle
the dharma practised by the sincere.

54 Superior indeed is the muni
who behaves in this manner.
The senses, the objects of the senses,
the five mahā-elements,

55 The mind, *buddhi*-intellect,
ahaṁkāra-egoism,
the unmanifested, the Puruṣa, –
when one comprehends
the nature of all these
after deep study and analysis,

56 Then one is freed of all fetters
and finds heavenly fulfilment.
The truth-seeker,
at the close of his life,

57 Should concentrate singlemindedly
on the Supreme Attainment.
Depending on no one,
he will attain mokṣa,

58 He will be fetter-free,
he will be free of attachments,
he will be free and flow
like the wind in the sky,
he will exhaust
his storehouse of karma
and, unperplexed and perfected,
find the Final Fulfilment.

SECTION FORTY-SEVEN

1 The Brahmin continued:
Our elders who always spoke the truth
said: *Saṁnyāsa*-renunciation
is the same as tapasyā creative self-discipline
According to Brahma-knowers,
stable in their Brahma-yoni heritage,
knowledge is Supreme Brahma itself.

2 Very far away is Brahma
ensconced in the wisdom of the Vedas.
Devoid of *dvandva*-duality
guṇa-free, it is *nitya*-eternal;
it cannot be conceived by the mind's guṇas,
it is the Supreme *Uttamaṁ*.

3 The wise see the Supreme
with knowledge and tapasyā,
with their unspotted mind,
with the clarity of purity,
cleansed of the blurring
created by their rajas-guṇa.

4 Those who are deep in *saṁnyāsa*
and know the nature of Brahma
attain the Supreme Lord Parameśvara
through the grace of their tapasyā.

5 It is said: Tapasyā is radiance,
character is dharma,
knowledge is the supreme attainment,
saṁnyāsa is the best tapasyā.

6 The person who sees what really is –
the ātman residing
effortlessly in all creatures –
he becomes the everywhere-reacher.

7 The learned man transcends sorrow
because he
in separateness sees togetherness
and unity in diversity.

8 Brahma-becoming is possible
for the person without kāma,
and without any negative feelings,
even when still in this world.

9 There is no doubt of this:
Liberated is the person
who knows the guṇas of Pradhāna
which is *Prakṛti*,
and who has risen above *ahaṁkāra*
and *mama* me-and-mine.

10 *Nir-dvandva*
Duality-free
Nir-namaskāra
Formality-free
Niḥ-svadhākāra
Rid-of-rituals
serenely he attains
the Guṇa-free Glory
Duality-free
Eternal Divinity

11 There is no doubt of this:
Giving up karma
auspicious and unauspicious,
giving up truth
as well as untruth,
he attains mokṣa.

12 The unmanifest
its yoni-origin
The *buddhi*-intellect
its mahā-trunk
Mahā-*ahaṁkāra*
its boughs
The senses
its sprigs and sprouts

13 The five mahā-elements
its large branches
The objects of the senses
its smaller branches
with ever-greening leaves
and ever-blossoming flowers
and fruits that are sweet
and fruits that are bitter

14 The Brahma-vrkṣa Sanātana
The Eternal Tree of Brahma
the everlasting support
of all the world's creatures
With truth-knowledge your sword
cut down this tree

15 And be the wise man
and shatter the bonds
of birth and decay and death
and freed of me-and-mine
be rid of *ahaṁkāra.*
There is no doubt of this.

16 Two birds sit
they always sit
on this tree:
mind and intellect:
two close friends
always busy
not very percipient
two foolish birds
But there is another
the intelligent one
very different from them
So it is said
regarding the ātman.

17 The undifferentiated stuff
of nature lacks *cetana*:
it is without consciousness.
The antarātmā
the individual ātman
is gifted with *sattva*
the consciousness of self-knowing
Those who know the *kṣetra*-bọdy
transcend the fettering guṇas
and from all ill-deeds
they find the Final Freedom.

SECTION FORTY-EIGHT

1 The Brahmin continued:
According to some,
Brahma is a tree;
according to others,
Brahma is a mahā-forest.
According to some,
Brahma is unmanifest;
according to others,
it is transcendent
and imperfection-free.

2 Eligible for immortality
is the person who,
on the point of death,
is serene even by a single breath.

3 Controlling his ātman
by his ātman,
even for no longer
than an eye-blink,
he experiences the bliss
of absorption in the ātman
and attains the world
that is valued by the wise.

4 Practising the way of breath-control
known as *prāṇāyāma*,
he progresses beyond
the ten or twelve stages
and attains the twentyfifth Fulfilment,
having crossed four-and-twenty.

5 With the serenity of a *prasannātmā*
he attains every aspiration.
The *sattva*-base of the unmanifest
seeks its own immortal nature;

6 Those who know *sattva* as such praise it,
saying nothing excels *sattva.*
O finest of the twice-born ones!
We can logically conclude
that Puruṣa is based in *sattva.*
It is not possible
to describe the nature of Puruṣa
in any other way.

7 Fortitude, patience, ahiṁsā,
impartiality, truth, simplicity,
knowledge, giving up *saṁnyāsa*-renunciation –
these are sāttvika values.

8 This is the logic by which,
according to the wise,
Puruṣa's base is *sattva.*
There is no doubt of this.

9 There are some steeped in knowledge
according to whom
the oneness of Kṣetrajña with *sattva*
is completely untenable.

10 They argue that *sattva*
is distinct from Kṣetrajña,
since *sattva* has no consciousness.
Sattva and Kṣetrajña
exist side by side,
but they are different.

11 Other very learned ones declare
that their simultaneous
one-ness and many-ness
has to be accepted.
Sameness and separate-ness
characterise the *muśaka*-gnat
and the *udambara*
water-flow.

12 A fish is different
from the water it swims in –
the two are together, yet apart.
They are like water drops
on a lotus leaf –
together yet apart.

13 The guru said:
The excellent Brahmin munis
heard this exposition
and expressed their doubts
to Loka-pitāmaha Brahmā.

SECTION FORTY-NINE

1 The ṛṣis asked: Which dharma
is to be always preferred?
We find all the dharmas
contradicting each other.

2 Some say it survives
the death of the body.
Some say it does not exist.
Some say
everything is doubtful.
Others have no doubts at all.

3 Some say the so-called Eternal
is not eternal at all.
Some say it exists,
others it does not exist.
Some say it's one-formed, or two-formed,
others say it is a mixture.

4 Some truth-seeing Brahma-knowing Brahmins
say it is one,
others say it is split,
others say it is multiple.

5 Some say time and space exist,
others say they do not.
Some prefer matted hair and deerskin,
others shave their heads and go naked.

6 Some do not even bathe,
others are always washing themselves.
These are the views of the gods
and truth-seeing Brahma-knowing Brahmins.

7 Some love food,
others take to fasting.
Some praise karma,
others praise inactive *śānti*.

8 Some praise mokṣa,
others recommend fun.
Some seek wealth,
others embrace poverty.
Some recommend means,
others applaud ends.

9 Some choose ahīṁsā,
others are destructive.
Some prefer merit and fame,
others reject both.

10 Some have faith in goodness,
others are full of doubt.
Some love pleasure, some love pain.
Others prefer meditation.

11 Some learned *vipras* praise *yajñas*,
others recommend gifts.
Some eulogise *tapasyā*,
others study the sacred texts.

12 Some say knowledge is the same
as *saṁnyāsa*-renunciation.
Some study the elements of nature
only to praise human nature.
Some are gushing with praise,
others do not praise at all.

13 O most excellent of the gods!
We are so confused.
Dharma is riddled with contradictions.
What certainty is there?

14 "This is the best," one says.
"No, this is best," says another.
The dharma he practises
is the dharma he pūjā-praises.

15 Our mind is so upset,
our understanding so troubled.
O finest of all beings!
Tell us what is best for us.

16 We wish to know from you
what is so supremely mysterious.
Clarify for us the relation
between *sattva* and Ksetrajña.

17 Confronted by the learned *vipras*,
the dharmātmā Bhagavān,
the creator of the Cosmos
gave an appropriate reply.

SECTION FIFTY

1 The Brahmin replied:
I will reply
to all your questions.
Listen to what a guru
said to an enquiring disciple.

2 Listen to it carefully,
and draw your own conclusions.
There is no greater duty
than ahiṁsā for all creatures.

3 No goal is higher than this,
it overcomes all negative feelings,
it is a sure sign of dharma.
Our wise convinced elders
declared with inseeing certainty:
"Knowledge is supreme."

4 It is knowledge that purifies you
of all defect and ill-deed.
The perpetrators of violence and terror
are negative-thinking *nāstikas*,
impelled by greed and delusion,
they go to the lowest hell.

5 Those who expect rewards of karma,
and strive assiduously,
are born again and again in this world
and enjoy their existence.

6 The ones with clear inseeing vision
are those whose karma
is based on *śraddhā* not expectations,
and performed with yogic dedication.

7 O finest of men!
Let me now clarify for you
the relationship and difference
between *sattva*-reality
and Kṣetrajña the knower-of-the-body.
Listen to me carefully.

8 The relationship is said to be
between subject and object.
Puruṣa is always the subject,
and *sattva* is always the object.

9 I gave earlier the examples
of the gnat and *udambara*
to explain that *sattva*
being that which is enjoyed
does not know Kṣetrajña,
but Kṣetrajña knows the difference
between the thing-object-enjoyed *sattva*
and the spirit-subject-enjoyer ātman.

10 According to the wise,
sattva consists of duality,
and Kṣetrajña is *nirguṇātmaka*,
free of the guṇas.

11 Kṣetrajña is the same in all,
the knowledge-experiencer in all.
Like a lotus-leaf unstained by water,
is the Kṣetrajña untouched by *sattva.*

12 Like a lotus-leaf unstained by water-drops,
the learned are not stained
by the guṇas, though experiencing the guṇas
in their everyday life.

13 These are the fortunate free-of-attachment.
There is no doubt of this.
The wealth Puruṣa enjoys is *sattva* –
this much is certain –

14 And the relationship between the two
is of owner and wealth.
Like a traveller flashing a light
in a dark region,
the seeker of the Supreme uses *sattva*
to light up his path.

15 The light will shine so long
as the guṇa feeds it.
When the wealth of the guṇa is exhausted,
the light will flicker out.

16 So *sattva*-guṇa is manifest,
but Puruṣa is unmanifest.
Understand this well, O learned ones!
I proceed now to other matters.

17 A thousand clarifications will fail to satisfy
a weak-minded man.
One-fourth of such clarification is enough
to make an intelligent man happy.

18 This is the way to obtain dharma
through the means of knowledge.
An infinity of happiness awaits the person
who knows how to be happy.

19 A traveller who sets forth
without proper preparation
will find hazards troubling him,
and he may even face ruin;

20 So understand well that karma
can either succeed or fail.
A person's success or failure
may depend entirely
on the auspicious or inauspicious deeds
of his previous life.

21 A person lacking inseeing vision
into the meaning of life
is like a traveller setting forth unprepared
on a long journey.

22 But the progress of a learned man
is like that of one
riding a chariot pulled
by fleet horses –

23 And, once he has reached high ground,
the flat earth is left behind.
But look – even a chariot-rider,
if he is foolish,

24 Having reached the high ground,
is tired and troubled,
though well-appointed in his chariot.
The intelligent man
rides till where the chariot-road ends,
then continues on foot.

25 The intelligent fact-facing yogi
and the guṇa-knower
embark on the journey of life
knowing what to do when.

26 What will he face except doom –
the boatless sailor
who stupidly tries to swim across
a mahā-tempestuous ocean?

27 What will he get except success –
the wise man
who enters the water
in a boat with oars, smoothly,

28 Tirelessly, crosses the lake,
and once he has reached
the other shore, discards the boat,
saying, "Not mine any more"?

29 But, deluded by sentimentality,
another says, "Mine",
and sails about in circles endlessly
in the same boat.

30 You cannot travel in a boat
as you can in a chariot,
and you cannot ride a chariot
as if it was a boat –

31 Different karmas transport their doers
into different directions.
The consequences that overcome you
depend on the karma you do.

32 That which is without smell, rasa,
shape, touch, sound,
and which munis meditate on,
is known as Pradhāna.

33 A synonym for Pradhāna is Avyakta,
the Unmanifested.
Emerging from Pradhāna is Mahat,
or Prakṛti-Nature,
and emerging from Prakṛti
is Ahaṁkāra-Egoism.

34 From Ahaṁkāra emerge the Mahā-bhūta Guṇas,
the Basic Elements.
They are variously named
as the different guṇas.

35 We have heard that the Mahānātmā
is a *bīja*-dharma seed-essence;
it is unmanifested,
and it repeatedly fructifies.

36 *Ahaṁkāra* also is *bīja*-dharma seed-essence,
repeatedly fructifying.
The five mahā-elements also
are *bija*-dharma seed-essences.

37 It is said that these five elements
are *bīja*-dharma fructifiers:
from them emerge the world's phenomena
characterised by *citta*-awareness.

38 *Ākāśa*-ether has one guṇa-characteristic,
wind has two, they say;
light has three charcteristics,
water has four.

39 Teeming with mobile and immobile life,
earth has all five guṇa-qualities.
She is a devī,
the goddess of fertility,
the repository of every-thing
auspicious and inauspicious.

40 O finest of the twice-born!
Sound, touch, shape, rasa, smell –
understand these five guṇas
to belong to the earth.

41 Smell is its very special guṇa.
Smell is of many kinds.
Let me give you in detail
its great variety.

42 Fragrant, foul, sweet, sour,
pungent, far-reaching,
mixed, immediate,
oily and dry, and clean –

43 Know these to be the ten smells
that belong to the earth.
Sound, touch, shape and taste –
are the four guṇas of water.

44 Let me expound now on rasa.
Rasa is of many kinds:
Sweet, sour, pungent, bitter,
astringent, salty.

45 Similarly, the rasa of water
has these six characteristics also.
The three guṇas of light
are sound, touch and colour.

46 Colour is the guṇa of light,
and colour is of many kinds:
white, black, red, blue,
yellow, and grey;

47 And short, long, tiny, vast,
square, circular.
These are the twelve shades
of the colour of light.

48 Truth-speaking dharma-dedicated Brahmins
are supposed to know this.
Sound and touch are the two guṇas
associated with wind.

49 Touch is said to be of many kinds.
Rough, cold, hot, tender and clean,

50 Hard, oily, smooth, slippery, painful, soft –
Touch has these twelve guṇas, it is said.

51 Dharma-dedicated, truth-inseeing Brahmins
Who have found fulfilment, say this.

52 *Ākāśa*-space has only one guṇa: sound.
I will give you details about sound.

53 Śaḍaja
Ṛṣabha with Gāndhāra
Madhyama and Pañcama
After which Niṣāda
Then Daivata –
Apart from these are
iṣṭa-pleasant and *amiṣṭa*-unpleasant
and *saṁhata* sounds . . .

54 *Ākāśa*-born sounds consist of these ten.
Ākāśa is the supreme element;
above *ākāśa* is *ahaṁkāra*-egoism;

55 Above *ahaṁkāra* is *buddhi* -intellect;
Above *buddhi* is the ātman;
Above the ātman is the *avyakta*-unmanifest;
Above the *avyakta* is Puruṣa.

56 Who can distinguish between
superior and inferior creatures
Who knows all there is to know
about the nature of karma
Who sees himself as the ātman
in the world's creatures
Such a person attains
the Imperishable Ātman.

SECTION FIFTY-ONE

1 The Brahmin replied:
Mind is the *īśvara*-lord
of the five elements,
and they emerge from the mind;
for which reason
the mind is *bhūtāmā*,
the ātman-of-the-elements.

2 The mind lords it
over the five mahā-elements.
The *buddhi*-intellect
has *aiśvarya*-glory,
for which reason
it is the *Kṣetrajña*.

3 Like a charioteer yoking good horses,
the mind yokes the senses.
The senses, the mind, and *buddhi*
are always yoked to the *Kṣetrajña*.

4 The *bhūtāmā* mounts the chariot
pulled by mahā-horses,
which has *buddhi* as its reins,
and drives around everywhere.

5 Equipped with the senses,
with mind as its charioteer,
buddhi the always ready reins,
is the Brahma-radiant mahā-chariot.

6 Wise is he, and always undeluded,
the finest of human beings,
who sees the Brahma-radiant chariot
as it should be seen.

7 Its origin the unmanifested
Its size the multitude
of sense organs and objects
and the hordes
of moving and unmoving creatures
Its light the sun and the moon

8 Its beauty the planets and constellations
Its enchantment the hills and rivers
Its decorations all its flowing waters –

9 The life-sustainer of all creatures
The final goal of all creatures –
This is the Forest-of-Brahma
in which the Kṣetrajña always travels.

10 The world's moving and unmoving creatures
are the first to get dissolved;
then are dissolved the guṇas
that produce the world's creatures.
Then are dissolved the multitudinous guṇas
of the five elements.

11 Gods
Humans
Gandharvas
Piśācas
Antigods
Rākṣasas –
All originate from *svabhāva.*
No cause created them,
No act of creation.

12 The creators of the universe
are the enlightened *vipra*-saints-and-poets
and they are born here
again and again
Whatever originates from them,
dissolves in the ripeness of time
into the five maha-elements,
like surging ocean waves.

13 The five mahā-elements
transcend the elements
that form the universe.
Fulfilment is his
who is freed from the fetters
of the five mahā-elements.

14 With the power of his mind
did *prabhu*-lord Prajāpati
create all this.
With the power of tapasyā
was the nature of gods
achieved by ṛṣis.

15 By the power of tapasyā,
by subsisting entirely
on fruits and roots,
by deep meditation
were the three worlds attained
by perfected Siddhas.

16 All *sādhanā*-dedication
is rooted in tapasyā.
Medicines, herbs and the like
are obtained only by tapasyā.

17 Tapasyā overcomes every problem.
Difficult to acquire,
to learn, defeat and persuade? –
tapasyā will succeed in all.

18 Tapasyā properly practised
will cleanse a drunkard,
a thief, a foetus-killer,
and even a disciple
who sleeps with the wife
of his guru.

19 Humans, *pitṛs*, gods,
sacrificial animals, beasts and birds,
and all other life,
moving and unmoving,

20 By the practice of tapasyā
find the fulfilment they seek.
The mahā-māyā-making gods
gained heaven by tapasyā.

[XIV:51:21-28]

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21 They reach the realm of Prajāpati
who busily involve themselves
in karma loaded with expectation,
full of *ahaṁkāra*-I-am-the-doer.

22 But the supreme realm,
the mahā-attainment
is achieved only by those mahātmās
who have shed me-and-mine,
who have no *ahaṁkāra*,
who practise pure *dhyāna*-yoga.

23 With the practice of *dhyāna*-yoga
attaining ātman-serenity,
these knowers of the ātman enter
the unmanifested treasure of happiness.

24 And those who are free of *ahaṁkāra*
and are reborn
after fulfilment in *dhyāna*-yoga –
they attain the Supreme Mahat.

25 Born from that same unmanifested
and attaining the same again,
freed of the tamas and rajas guṇas,
supported solely by sattva-guṇa,

26 Freed of all defect and ill-deed,
he becomes an all-creator;
he is the perfect Kṣetrajña,
he is the *veda-vit* wise-in-the-Vedas.

27 With the help of *citta*-self-awareness
attaining *citta*-self-introspection,
a muni should discipline himself.
Where your *citta* is focused,
that you will become.
This is the eternal wonder.

28 That which originates from *avyakta*
in the form of objects
should be classified as *avidyā*-ignorance:
a host of guṇas and symbols.

29 *Mama* – me, me – has two syllables,
like *mṛtyu* – death;
na mama – not me, me – has three syllables,
like Brahma.
Mama is the way to *mṛtyu*-mortality,
na mama to *śāsvata*-eternity.

30 There are weak-minded men
who speak highly of karma.
The mahātmā elders, however,
never eulogise karma.

31 It is karma that makes possible
the birth of a creature
with a sixteen-matter-made body
of *avidyā*-ignorance
that swallows puruṣa-spirit.
The karma-created creature
is also the preferred candidate
of the *amṛta*-sipping gods.

32 Which is why attachment to karma
is rejected
by all who have far-seeing vision,
Puruṣa, however,
is a magnificence of knowledge,
not karma-constrained.

33 Unfettered by the death is the person
who knows the immortal,
the immutable eternal, imperishable,
attachment free, disciplined ātman.

34 He who knows the ātman as birthless,
as without any creator,
eternal, stable, incomprehensible
even to the nectar-sipping gods –
such a person becomes guṇa-ungraspable
and *amṛta*-deathless.

35 Wiping out all *saṁskāra*-rituals
and social formalities,
disciplining his ātman with his ātman,
he experiences
the auspicious Brahma-fulfilment
that nothing can excel.

36 His insight gets purified,
he basks in tranquil grace.
Tranquil grace is a state
resembling the serenity of a dream.

37 This is the goal of all
who with the help of knowledge
seek the fulfilment of freedom.
They see everything clearly
evolving and revolving
in the material world.

38 This is the goal of those
dissatisfied with the world.
This is their Sanātana Dharma.
This is the wealth of the learned.
This is the noble character
that is never questioned.

39 And this goal can be attained
by the impartial, the unattached,
the one without expectations,
whose inseeing vision sees all equally.

40 O excellent twice-born ṛṣis!
I have clarified everything.
If you want to succeed,
it is up to you to act.

41 The guru said:
Inspired by their guru Brahma,
the mahātmās
acted as was required of them
and attained felicity.

42 O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
You have the percipience,
you should also follow
the advice of Brahmā.
There is no doubt
that you will succeed.

43 Vāsudeva-Krishna said:
Kaunteya-Arjuna!
Instructed in supreme dharma
by his guru, the disciple obeyed,
and attained mokṣa.

44 He did all he should have done,
O enhancer of Ḳaurava glory,
and he attained the state
of perfect sorrowlessness.

45 Arjuna asked:
Who was this Brahmin,
O Janārdana-Krishna?
And who was his disciple?
O radiant one! *Vibho*!
If you think me worthy,
tell me this.

46 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied:
O mahā-muscled one!
I am the guru,
your mind is my disciple.
Because I love you,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
I give you this secret.

47 O noble-vowed one!
O enhancer of Kaurava glory!
If you love me,
follow what you have heard
about the Adhyātmā,
and abide by its wisdom.

48 O exterminator of enemies!
After practising this dharma,
you will be freed of all ill-deeds,
and attain mokṣa.

49 When the battle was about to begin,
O mahā-muscled one,
I gave you this very advice.
Do not forget this.

50 And now, O excellent Bharata,
I have been away
from my *prabhu*-lord father too long.
I will go and meet him,
and for that I seek your leave,
O Phālguna-Arjuna.

51 Vaiśampāyana said:
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's reply
to Krishna was:
"We will leave this town today
and go to Hastināpura.

52 We will meet the dharmātmā
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira there.
With his permission,
you will leave for your city."

SECTION FIFTY-TWO

1 Vaiśampāyana continued:
Krishna ordered Dāruka,
"Yoke my chariot."
In no time at all Dāruka said,
"It is done."

2 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
ordered his attendants:
"Get everything ready.
We leave today for Hastināpura."

3 The army men prepared themselves,
O lord of the world,
and said to illimitably energetic Pārtha-Arjuna:
"We are ready."

4 They sat in the chariot,
Krishna and Pāṇḍava-Arjuna,
and, conversing pleasantly,
proceeded on their journey.

5 O finest of the Bharatas!
Mahā-energetic Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
once more said
to Vāsudeva-Krishna in the chariot:

6 "O enhancer of Vṛṣṇi glory!
The rājā has been victorious
through your grace.
His enemies are all dead.
The kingdom is now again his,
who no thorn in it.

7 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
You are the powerful support
of the Pāṇḍavas.
With you as our boat,
we have safely crossed
the Kaurava ocean.

8 O Viśva-karman Universe-Maker!
O Viśvātman!
O Viśva-sattama Finest-of-all-beings!
Namaste-astu!
I namaskāra you!
I know you as much
as you want me
to know you.

9 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
It is your energy that infuses
the ātman of every creature.
You play with everyone.
The earth and the sky
are all your māyā.

[XIV:52:10-15]

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10 The world's moving and unmoving life
is stable in you.
You are the ceaseless creator
of the four forms of life.

11 You are the creator
of earth, sky and heaven.
The lucid light of the moon
is your smile,
and the seasons are your senses,
O Madhusūdana-Krishna.

12 The ever-roving wind
is your *prāṇa*-breath;
eternal *sanātana* death
is your anger;
Śrī the goddess of prosperity
is your grace;
O mahā-minded one,
Śrī is always in you.

13 You are delight
You are contentment
You are patience
You are lovingkindness
You are decisiveness
You are beauty
You are the universe
of moving and unmoving life
O defectless one
You are the end of the yuga
at the time of dissolution.

14 No matter how long it takes me,
I cannot exhaust your guṇas.
You are the Ātmā and Paramātmā!
Namaste, lotus-eyed one!

15 O irresistible one! I have heard
from Nārada and Devala
and Kṛṣṇā-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa
and the Kuru-pitāmaha Bhīṣma

16 That all is stable in you.
You are Janeśvara,
the lord of all creatures.
It is the great goodness
of your boundless grace,
O defectless one,

17 O Janārdana-Krishna,
that you have instructed me.
I will do as you advise.
Incredibily wonderful
is the deed you have done,
as a favour to us,

18 Of ensuring the death in battle
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana.
It was you who incinerated
their army on the battlefield.

19 Yours was the marvellous feat!
Mine was the victory.
By your intelligence and valour,
in battle were Duryodhana,

20 Karṇa, vicious Saindhava-Jayadratha
and Bhūriśravas
killed on the battlefield,
on advice from you.

21 I will do all you advise me,
O son of Devakī,
because you are pleased with me.
I promise you this.

22 I will go to dharmātmā
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
and ask him
to give you leave to go,
O dharma-knower,
O defectless one.

[XIV:52:23-30]

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23 *Prabhu*-lord! I approve
of your leaving for Dvārakā.
You will soon, Janārdana-Krishna,
meet my maternal uncle.

24 You will also meet
irresistible Baladeva-Balarāma
and other Vṛṣṇi chiefs."
Conversing pleasantly
in this manner,
they arrived in Hastināpura.

25 They entered that bustling city
of cheerful and relaxed people.
They went to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's palace,
which resembled Śakra-Indra's mansion.

26 Mahārāja! There they saw
lord-of-men Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
mahā-learned Vidura
and rājā Yudhiṣṭhira;

27 Impossible-to-defeat Bhīmasena,
the twin sons of Mādrī and Pāṇḍu,
the unvanquished son
in the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Yuyutsu;

28 Mahā-wise Gāndhārī, Pṛthā-Kuntī,
lovely-limbed Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī,
Subhadrā and other ladies
of the Bharata dynasty;

29 And all the ladies who attended
to the needs of Gāndhārī.
They went to rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
the two chastisers of their foes,

30 Anounced their names
and took the dust of his feet.
Touching the feet of Gāndhārī,
Pṛthā-Kuntī, and Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,

31 The mahātmās also touched
the feet of Bhīma.
They embraced Kṣattā-Vidura,
and wished his welfare.

32 They embraced the mahā-chariot-hero
son of a Vaiśya maid, Yuyutsu,
after which both approached again
the old monarch Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
Night fell, and mahārāja Dhṛtarāṣṭra
gave the Kaurava-glory-enhancers

33 And Janārdana-Krishna permission,
wisely, to retire to their rooms.
With the monarch's leave,
they went to their apartments.

34 Valiant Krishna went to stay
with Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
where he was revered and provided
with every comfort and pleasure.

35 Supremely wise Krishna spent the night
happily in sleep
in the company of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
In the morning,
the two heroes completed
their ablution rituals,

36 And, lavishly honoured and revered,
they went to the palace
where mahā-powerful Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
was sitting with his ministers.

37 In that splendidly furnished palace,
the two mahātmās
met Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
like the twin Aśvins
meeting the rājā of the gods
Devarāja Indra.

38 With the permission of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
who was delighted to welcome them,
the Vṛṣṇi and Kaurava bull-brave heroes
take their seats.

39 The supremely wise rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
was eager to speak to them.
That finest of rājās
and finest of speakers said:

40 "O Kaurava-glory-enchancing heroes!
If you have something
you wish to say to me, say it.
I am listening. Do not hesitate."

41 Expertly eloquent Phālguna-Arjuna
approached Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
with humble dignity,
and said:

42 "O rājā! Illustrious Vāsudeva-Krishna
has been away from home for long.
With your permission,
he wishes to visit his father.

43 If you think it proper,
O heroic one,
grant him leave to go
to the city of Anārta."

44 Yudhiṣṭhira replied:
"*Bhadraṁ te*! May you fare well!
O lotus-eyed Madhusūdana-Krishna!
Proceed today itself to Dvāravatī, *prabhu*-lord,
and meet Śūra's son Vasudeva.

45 O mahā-muscled Keśava-Krishna!
You have my happy permission.
It is long since you saw Devakī devī
and my maternal uncle.

46 O mahā-wise bestower of honour!
Meet my maternal uncle
and Baladeva-Balarāma,
and give both my pūjā-respect.

47 And remember to think of me daily,
and supremely powerful Bhīma,
O honour-bestower, *mānada*,
and Phālguna-Arjuna, and Nakula and Sahadeva.

48 O defectless mahā-armed one!
Meet the Ānartas, and your father,
and the Vṛṣṇis; after which
attend here my Horse Sacrifice.

49 O Krishna of the Sātvatas!
Go and take with you
precious gems and other wealth,
and whatever else you wish.

50 It is by your grace alone,
O Keśava-Krishna,
that our enemies have been killed
and the earth is ours."

51 Kaurava Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
said this,
and finest-of-men Vāsudeva-Krishna
said in reply:

52 "O mahā-armed one!
Gems and jewels,
all riches the earth,
the wealth I have,
O lord-*īśvara*,
are in your hands."

53 Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
said, "So be it,"
and pūjā-respected
the truly valiant
elder brother of Gada,
Gadāgraja-Krishna,
who proceeded to meet
his father's sister,
his paternal aunt Kuntī,
whom he pūjā-praised
with respectful *pradakṣiṇa*
circumambulation.

54 She received him warmly,
as did the others,
headed by Vidura.
Then Gadāgraja
Gada's eldest brother
Caturbhuja
Four-armed Krishna
left Nāgapura-Hastināpura
in his splendid chariot.

55 Escorting his sister,
lovely Subhadrā,
Mahā-bhuja mahā-armed
Janārdana-Krishna,
taking the permission
of his paternal aunt
and Yudhiṣṭhira,
left, accompanied
by a host of citizens.

56 Following Mādhava-Krishna
were Arjuna, whose flag
was vānara-emblemed,
Sātyaka, the twin sons
of Mādravatī,
supremely wise Vidura,
and Bhīma himself,
who walked with the gait
of a rājā-of-elephants.

57 *Vīryavān*-valiant
Janārdana-Krishna
requested the retinue
of enhancers-of-the-glory-
of-the-Kaurava-kingdom
to return to the city,
and then to Dāruka
and Sātyaki he said:
"Drive fast the chariot."

58 Crusher-of-all-
the-hordes-of-his-enemies
Janārdana-Krishna,
crowned-with-renown,
accompanied by heroic
Sātyaki of the Śinis,
drove to the city
named Anartapurī,
like Śatakratu-Indra
of a hundred sacrifices,
after killing his enemies,
proceeding towards heaven.

SECTION FIFTY-THREE

1 As Vārṣṇeya-Krishna drove ahead
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
the foe-chastising bull-brave Bharatas,
after embracing him,
returned to their city
along with their attendants.

2 Phālguna-Arjuna was the one
who repeatedly embraced Vārṣṇeya-krishna,
and gazed longingly at him
as long as he was in eyesight-range.

[XIV:53:3-9]

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3 It was painful for Pārtha-Arjuna
to stop gazing
at Govinda-Krishna;
for invincible Krishna,
to stop gazing at Arjuna
was equally painful.

4 Listen to me, and I will describe
in every detail
what happened
when mahātmā Krishna left.

5 A wind of mahā-velocity
started blowing,
clearing the track of sand
and dust and thorns.

6 It was Vāsava-Indra who poured
pure and fragrant showers
and celestial flowers to please
the Śārṅga-bow-wielder Krishna.

7 When the mahā-armed hero Krishna
came near a desert area,
he saw the illimitably radiant
foremost-of-munis Uttaṅka.

8 Large-eyed, energetic Krishna
pūjā-praised the muni,
who reciprocated
with appropriate pūjā-praise,
after which Krishna enquired
about the muni's well-being

9 Enquired by Madhusūdana-Krishna,
the incomparable Brahmin Uttaṅka,
after pujā-praising him,
asked Mādhava-Krishna:

10 "You have stayed in the mansions
of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.
O Śauri-Krishna, have you succeeded
in creating a bond between then
as should be between brothers?
Tell me everything.

11 O bull-brave Vṛṣṇi!
O Keśava-Krishna!
They are your relatives,
very dear to you.
Have you been able
to reconcile those heroes?

12 O foe-chastiser! *Paraṁtapa*!
Will the five sons of Pāṇḍu
and the progeny of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
live happily together,
enjoying this world
in which they live as survivors?

13 You are the master-mind *nātha*,
O Keśava-Krishna,
who pacified the Kauravas.
Will the rājās
continue to savour the peace
they now possess?

14 *Tāta*! Dear one!
I placed full faith in you.
Tāta! Has that hope for the Bharatas
borne fruit?"

15 Śrī Bhagavān Krishna replied:
"I did all I could
to reconcile the Kauravas.
I failed in my peace-making

16 They are all dead – all –
sons and relatives.
Intelligence and show of force
are helpless against destiny.

17 O defectless mahā-ṛṣi!
You surely know this already.
The Kauravas rejected the advice
I, Bhīṣma and Vidura gave them.

18 They confronted each other,
and they entered the realm of Yama,
the god of death.
Only the five Pāṇḍavas survive;
their friends and children are all dead.
The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
are all dead; all dead,
their children, and their relatives."

19 This reply of Krishna
roused the wrath of Uttaṅka.
Eyes rolling with rage,
he said:

20 "You had the power, Krishna,
to save
all the bull-brave Kauravas,
your own dear relatives.
Yet you failed!
I curse you!

21 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
You could have forced them –
and you did not!
In my anger I curse you!

22 It seems, Mādhava-Krishna,
and it is shameful,
that you played false with them,
you tricked them.
Able, yet you failed!
All those splendid Kauravas
are dead because of you –
because of your indifference!"

23 "O Bhṛgu-descendant! Bhṛgu-nandana!"
replied Vāsudeva-Krishna.
"Listen carefully
th what I have to say.
You are a man of tapasyā.
Please accept my apology.

24 Listen to what I have to say
about the Adhyātmā
before you curse me.
It is not possible
for a man with miniscule tapasyā
to condemn me.

25 I do not want to see
the ruin of your tapasyā.
Granted that you possess
a mass of mahā-radiant tapasyā,
and granted that you
have gratified your gurus and elders.

26 O finest of the twice-born!
From your childhood
you have practised brahmacarya.
I know this.
I do not wish that you
should lose
the power of your tapasyā,
your hard-won tapasyā."

SECTION FIFTY-FOUR

1 "Speak to me then, O Keśava-Krishna,"
said Uttaṅka,
"about immaculate Adhyātmā.
After listening to you,
I will decide, O Janārdana-Krishna,
to curse you or praise you.

[XIV:54:2-8]

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2 Vāsudeva-Krishna said:
"Know then that, with my support,
exist tamas, rajas and sattva.
The Rudras and Vasus also, O twice-born one,
have originated from me.

3 All creatures are in me,
and I am in all creatures.
Let there be no doubt
in your mind about this.

4 O twice-born one,
realise also that the hosts of Daityas,
Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Rākṣasas, Nāgas and Apsarās
have all originated from me.

5 I am the ātman essence
of what is and what is not,
what is manifest and not-manifest,
what is perishable and imperishable.

6 I am the ātman-essence
of the four kinds of dharma
recommended for the four āśramas,
the four stages of life,
and of all the activities
ordained in the Vedas.

7 What is not and what is,
and what exists
beyond what is and what is not –
all that does not exist
outside of me, the Eternal God-of-gods
Deva-deva Sanātana.

8 O enhancer of Bhṛgu glory!
Consider me
to be the Vedas that originate
from Auṁkāra.
I am the yajña-pole, the soma-drink,
the *caru* sacred offering,
I am the *homa* ritual performed
to please the gods;

9 I am the *hotā* oblation-power,
and the *havana*-offering,
the *adhvaryu*-priest, the *kalpaka*,
and the supremely sanctified *havi*.

10 I am the one who is praised
by the *udgātā*-chanter
in the songs of the great sacrifice,
and, O Brahmin,
in the rituals of expiation
the *śānti-maṅgala* chants

11 Are sung in my praise,
O excellent twice-born one,
for I am Viśva-karman the World-Maker.
O excellent twice-born one,
keep in mind that born from my mind
is my eldest son Dharma,

12 The *ātmaka*-essence of all creatures,
O *vipra*-saint.
I am perpetually evolving
in the world of mankind.

13 O most excellent one! *Sattama*!
To protect dharma
and to establish dharma,
I take birth in *yonis*.
I am helped by those who have overcome
their worldly weaknesses.

14 O descendant of Bhṛgu!
In the forms
that I assume in the three worlds,
I am known
as Viṣṇu and Brahmā
and Śakra-Indra.
I am the Creator
and I am the Destroyer.

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15 I am the maker of everything,
I am the breaker of everything.
I am the unchanging one
who destroys all doers of adharma.

16 In yuga after yuga,
I repair the bridge of dharma,
taking birth in different *yonis*
to ensure the welfare of creatures.

17 O Bhṛgu descendant! Bhrgu-nandana!
When I take birth in a deva-yoni,
I behave as a god behaves.
How can it be otherwise?

18 O Bhṛgu-descendant!
Born is a Gandharva-yoni
I behave as a Gandharva
is expected to behave.

19 Born in a Nāga-yoni,
I behave like a Nāga;
in a Yakṣa or a Rākṣasa,
as a Yakṣa or a Rākṣasa.

20 Born as a human,
I acted like a human.
I literally begged the Kauravas.
But they were gripped
by profound *moha*-delusion;
they spurned their own good.

21 I tried to frighten them,
angrily I warned of mahā-calamity.
I bared before them once again
the consequences they faced.

22 But they were gripped by adharma,
they were victims of Kāla-dharma;
they were killed by dharma on the field of battle,
they have gone to heaven, no doubt of that.

23 O finest of the twice-born!
The Pāṇḍavas also
have attained great glory and prosperity.
You asked; I have answered."

SECTION FIFTY-FIVE

1 Uttaṅka said:
"You are indeed the Creator of the universe,
Janārdana-Krishna
I know this because of the grace
you have bestowed on me.

2 O undeteriorating deity!
My mind is happily immersed in you.
O chastiser of foes!
I have decided not to curse you.

3 If you feel me worthy to receive
the least grace from you,
grant me a darshan of your Revelation,
O Janārdana-Krishna."

4 Vaiśampāyana continued:
What a pleased ātman Dhīmān Krishna
graced Uttaṅka
with a darshan of his form
as the eternal Vaiṣṇava,
the same Revelation he had granted
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

5 Uttaṅka had a vision
of mahā-armed Mahātmā Viśva-rūpa,
the Universe-Formed Divinity
that blazed with the glory
of a thousand suns,
that flamed like the god of fire,

6 Flooding the realm of *ākāśa*-ether,
everywhere-facing.
The wonderful vision
of Viṣṇu's supreme form,
the Parameśvara revelation
of the Supreme Īśvara
filled the *vipra* Uttaṅka
with amazement.

7 *Namo namaste*! O Ātman-of-all!
O Transcendental Nārāyaṇa!
O lotus-navelled Paramātman!
O lotus-eyed Mādhava!

8 O Golden-Wombed Divinity!
O Redeemer from saṁsāra-attachments!
O Ancient Purāṇa Antaryāma!
I namaskāra you!

9 You are the Āditya-radiance
removing the veil of ignorance!
You are the mahā-medicine
for the ills of the world!
I praṇāma you.
O be my fulfilment!

10 You are the essence
of all the Vedas!
You are the divinity
of all the gods!
You who are
the loved one of *bhaktas*,
O Eternal Vāsudeva,
accept my namaskāra!

11 O Punisher-of-people!
Janārdana-Krishna!
I am caught it up in karma,
I am trapped in ill-deed.
Lift me out of the grief
of my *moha*-delusion!

12 Uttaṅka exclaimed:
"O Viśva-Karman World-Creator!
Namaste-astu!
I namaskāra you!
O Viśva-ātman!
O Ātman of the universe!
O Viśva-Sambhava!
O Maker of the universe!
Your feet straddle the earth,
and your head
covers the firmament.

13 Your stomach fills the space
between earth and firmament!
All the directions are held in your arms.
Everywhere are you, O Acyuta-Krishna!

14 Deva! O my Divinity!
Inpull this incomparable form,
this impershable form,
and revert once more
to your human form
which also is eternal."

15 Vaiśampāyana continued:
And so it was, O Janamejaya,
that ātman-gratified Govinda-Krishna
said to Uttaṅka: "Ask any boon."
And Uttaṅka replied:

16 "O mahā-radiant Puruṣottama-Krishna!
Boon enough for me
is the vision you have granted me
of your divine form."

17 To which Krishna replied:
"This will not do!
You must ask for a boon.
My darshan cannot be benefit-less."

18 "In that case, *vibho*, radiant one,"
said Uttaṅka,
"I will do as you wish.
I would like to have water
whenever I want water.
Water is scarce in a desert."

19 Inpulling his *tejas*-energy,
īśvara-lord Krishna said to Uttaṅka:
"Think of me, whenever you need water."
Saying this, he sped towards Dvārakā.

20 One day, *bhagavān* Uttaṅka:
parched, yearning for water,
was wandering in the desert –
and he remembered Acyuta-Krishna.

21 Before percipient Uttaṅka appeared
a sky-clad naked outcaste hunter,
smeared with mire and muck,
ringed by a pack of dogs.

22 He looked horrendous.
He was armed with a sword
and bow and arrows.
Finest-of-the-twice-born Uttaṅka
saw jets of water
streaming from his penis.

23 The *mātaṅga*-hunter smiled;
he seemed to recognise Uttaṅka.
He said: "Uttaṅka!
Enhancer-of-Bhṛgu-honour!
Come!
Accept this water from me.

24 I can see you are parched.
I feel mahā-pity for you."
The muni listened,
but refused the water.

25 Percipient Uttaṅka bitterly blamed
Acyuta-Krishna.
But the hunter kept repeating:
"Drink! Drink!"

26 Uttaṅka refused.
So humiliated was the *antarātmā*
of the mahātmā muni
that he lost his temper.

27 Mahārāja! Refused by Uttaṅka,
the hunter and his dogs vanished.
Their sudden disappearance
created misgivings in Uttaṅka.

28 He thought:
Exterminator-of-enemies Krishna
has made a fool of me.
And it so happened then
that conch-*cakra*-and-mace-wielding Krishna
came along that road.

29 Mahā-*buddhi*-gifted Uttaṅka
saw him, and said:
"Puruṣa-sattama! Finest of men!
You should not have given

30 An outcaste hunter's urine as water
to a *vipra*-Brahmin, O radiant one."
Mahā-*buddhi*-gifted Janārdana-Krishna
heard him out,

31 And replied consolingly
to Uttaṅka:
"The way in which it was right
to offer you water –

32 That was exactly the way
the water was offered to you.
You failed to understand this.
I approached, for your sake,
Vajra-dhāri thunderbolt-wielding
Puraṁdara-Indra.

33 To that *prabhu*-lord I said:
'Give *amṛta*-nectar
in the form of water
to Uttaṅka.'
To which Devendra-Indra
gave this reply:
'It is not possible for a mortal
to become immortal.

34 Grant any other boon you like
to Uttaṅka.'
O Bhṛgu-descendant!
He kept saying this to me.
But I persisted, and I said
to Śacī's husband Indra:
'You must give *amṛta*-nectar
to Uttaṅka.'

35 Devendra-Indra did his best
to reassure me, saying:
'*Mahāmate*! O mahā-minded one!
If *amṛta* must be given
as you have requested,
then I as a *mātaṅga*-cāṇḍāla

36 Will go to that mahātmā
descendant of Bhṛgu
and offer him *amṛta*.
O radiant one! *Vibho*!
If the Bhṛgu-descendant
accepts what I offer,

37 Fine and well, I will go to him.
But if, O radiant one,
he refuses what I offer him,
I will deny him *amṛta*.'

38 Having made this agreement,
Vāsava-Indra came to you
in that disguise, to give you nectar,
which you refused.

39 You spurned *bhagavān* Indra
who came to you as a *cāṇḍāla*. –
a mahā-insult!
But let me see –
I will still do what I can
to meet your need.

40 O Brahmin! I will slake
your intolerable thirst.
Every time you are afflicted
by this deep need for water,

41 Clouds will form in the desert,
O Bhṛgu-descendant,
and they will give you sweet water
to quench your thirst.

42 They will be known as Uttaṅka-clouds."
Krishna's boon delighted Uttaṅka.
To this day, rain-bearing desert clouds
are known as Uttaṅka-clouds.

SECTION FIFTY-SIX

1 "What was the special tapasyā
of mahā-minded Uttaṅka,"
asked Janamejaya, "that enabled him
to be empowered
to curse Viṣṇu himself,
the source of all power?"

2 Vaiśampāyana replied: O Janamejaya!
Yoked to mahā-tapasyā was Uttaṅka.
He was a supremely energetic guru-*bhakta*,
who pūjā-respected none else.

3 The children of the ṛṣis,
O Bharata descendant,
all desired that their guru-devotion
be as profound as Uttaṅka's.

4 Gautama had many disciples,
O Janamejaya,
but the most love and affection he had
was for Uttaṅka.

5 Gautama was pleased and impressed
with Uttaṅka's self-control and purity,
and the excellence of the duties
he discharged for Gautama.

6 Thousands of his disciples,
one by one,
were permitted to return
to their homes.
But he loved Uttaṅka too much
to let him go.
Tāta, dear one, time passed,
mahā-muni Uttaṅka grew old.

7 But such was the muni's devotion
for his guru,
he never seemed to realise
he had grown old.
He went one day to collect wood,
O Indra-among-rājās.

8 Uttaṅka returned with a heavy load
of firewood.
Weary-ātmaned under the heavy load,
O foe-chastiser,

9 Fatigued and hungry and bent,
O rājā,
as he threw the sticks down,
one of them
got stuck with a lock
of his silver-white matted hair.

10 The stick fell, and with it fell
a lock of matted hair.
Tired and famished under the burden,
O Bharata-descendant,

11 Uttaṅka saw that sign of his aging,
and bewailed his grief.
The daughter of his guru,
a girl with lotus-petal eyes,

12 And ravishingly shaped hips,
a dharma-dedicated girl,
instructed by her father,
with bowed head,
cupped in her palms the tears
of disconsolate Uttaṅka.

13 Hot tear-drops – they scorched her palms;
she sprinkled them away
on the earth. So hot were they,
the earth refused them.

14 Profoundly pleased,
Gautama asked the *vipra* Uttaṅka:
"*Tāta*, my son, what is the matter?
Why are you so upset today?
O *vipra*-ṛṣi, tell me.
Calm yourself, and tell me all."

15 "My mind always inclined to you,"
replied Uttaṅka,
"always dedicated to my duties,
always full of bhakti,
always thinking of the ways
to best serve you,

16 Here I am, overcome by age
without even knowing it.
I never tasted any happiness.
I have served you a hundred years,
yet you have not given me leave
to return to my home.

17 O finest of the twice-born!
Many disciples, younger than me,
you have granted permission.
Hundreds and thousands
have completed their studies,
and received your permission."

18 “Mahākāla indeed has passed,”
replied Gautama,
“and I have been unaware of it,
O bull-brave Brahmin.
Your absolute guru-dedication for me
made me love you deeply.

19 But if you wish to leave now,
O Bhārgava,
then go. Go quickly.
I give you permission.

20 “What will I give my guru?”
asked Uttaṅka.
“O finest of the twice-born!
Tell me, O radiant one.
After offering it to you,
I will leave with your permission.”

21 “Those who are good,” said Gautama,
“say that the pleasure
of a pleased guru is the best gift.
O Brahmin!
I am more than pleased with you.
That cannot be doubted.

22 O enhancer of Bhṛgu glory!
I am fully pleased with you.
Were you today to become
a sixteen-year old,

23 I would gladly, O twice-born one,
bestow on you
my daughter to be you wife.
No other girl except her
is qualified
to match your energy.”

24 No sooner had Gautama said this
than Uttaṅka
was transformed into a young man.
He married
the illustrious young girl.
He asked his guru’s wife;

25 "What shall I give you
as my final guru-gift?
Order me, My life, my wealth,
are yours, to please you.

26 I give you my absolute word –
with the power of my tapasyā
I will bring for you
the most marvellous gem,
the most mahā-precious gem
that can be found in this world."

27 "O *vipra* Brahmin," said Ahalyā,
"O defectless one,
your profound *bhakti*
is gift enough for me.
Go, *tāta*, dear one, where you will.
Bhadraṁ te! Be blessed."

28 But, mahārāja (continued Vaiśampāyana),
Uttaṅka persisted:
"*Mātā*! Order me!
It is my duty to please you."

29 "*Bhadraṁ te*!" said Ahalyā.
"Get me the earrings
worn by the wife of Sudāsa;
let that be your guru-gift."

30 "*Tatheti*! It will be done."
Saying this, Uttaṅka left,
determined to bring the earrings
to please his guru's wife.

31 The bull-brave Brahmin Uttaṅka
went straight to Saudāsa,
who had become a man-eater,
in order to get the earrings.

32 Meanwhile Gautama said to his wife:
"I do not see Uttaṅka today."
She informed her husband that Uttaṅka
had gone to get earrings for her.

33 Gautama said to his wife:
"You did not do right.
Under the influence of the curse,
that earth-lord will kill Uttaṅka."

34 "*Bhagavan*, revered one," said Ahalyā,
"I did not know this
when I asked the Brahmin Uttaṅka.
Be gracious – save him."

35 To his wife Gautama replied:
"I will do what I can."
In the meantime, Uttaṅka met
rājā Saudāsa in a lonely forest.

SECTION FIFTY-SEVEN

1 The transformed rājā Saudāsa
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
looked truly fearful with human blood
gleaming on his beard.

2 Uttaṅka the *vipra*-Brahmin saw him
and remained unimpressed
by this mahā-radiant Yama-appartion,
who stood up and said:

3 "O incomparable Brahmin!
It is my good fortune
that you come here
at the sixth hour
when I am famished
and looking for a meal."

4 "I am here, O rājā," said Uttaṅka
"for my guru's sake.
The wise say no one can be harmed
who is serving his guru."

5 "O finest of the twice-born!"
replied the rājā.
"It is the sixth hour now,
and I am famished.
This is my meal-time.
I cannot let you go."

6 "In that case, mahārāja," said Uttaṅka,
"let us agree on this –
after serving my guru's need,
I will serve yours.

7 O incomparable rājā!
I am told that what I need
for my guru is in your hands.
O Indra-among-rājās!
O *nareśvara* lord-of-men!
I beg you: give it to me.

8 Every day you gift rich gems
to the foremost Brahmins.
From a gift-giver like you,
O tiger-among-men,
gifts can be gratefully accepted.
O finest of kings!
May I add that I also
am a deserving recipient?

9 O foe-conquering Indra-among-rājās!
I will offer the gift to my guru,
and I will keep my promsie
and offer myself to you.

10 This is the absolute truth.
I am not lying.
I do not lie even when joking,
forget the other times!"

11 "If what you want for your guru,"
replied Saudāsa,
"is something that I can offer,
and if I am worthy
of being honoured as a gift-giver,
then tell me what you want."

[XIV:57:12-19]

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12 “O bull-brave Saudāsa,” said Uttaṅka,
“because I honour you
as a worthy gift-giver,
I have come to you
to ask for the earrings
worn by your queen.”

13 “O *vipra*-ṛṣi,” said Saudāsa,
“they belong to my wife.
You should ask her.
Ask from me anything else,
O noble-vowed one,
and I shall give it to you.”

14 “Earth-lord,” said Uttaṅka,
“why all his evasion?
Be truthful. Believe me –
and give me the earrings.”

15 The rājā (continued Vaiśampāyana)
replied to Uttaṅka:
“O finest of men! Go to my devī
and ask the earrings from her.

16 O finest of the twice-born!
She is a pure-vowed lady.
If you tell her I have ordered it,
she will give them to you.”

17 “O lord of men! *Nareśvara*!”
said Uttaṅka.
“When can I meet your wife?
Why don’t you come with me?”

18 “You will find her near a forest pond,”
said Sandāsa.
“I cannot go and see her today
in the sixth hour.”

19 O bull-brave Bharata!
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
Uttaṅka went and met Madayantī
and asked her for the earrings.

20 The large-eyed lady heard
what Saudāsa had said,
O Janamejaya,
and she replied to Uttaṅka:

21 "O defectless Brahmin!
I know you are not lying,
but can you not give me
more tangible proof?

22 These are celestial jewelled earrings.
Gods and yakṣas and maharṣis
are always eager
to lay their hands on them.

23 Place these earrings on the ground,
and the Nāgas will steal them.
If an impure person wears them,
the Yakṣas will take them.
If their wearer dozes off,
the gods will claim them.

24 O finest of the twice-born!
The gods, rākṣasas and Nāgas
are always on the prowl.
The only safety lies in vigilance.

25 O finest of the twice-born!
Day and night,
gold oozes from these earrings.
Not just that –
their glow at night absorbs
the radiance of the stars.

26 *Bhagavan!* Revered one!
Their wearer overcomes
hunger and thirst and fear,
and poison and fire as well.

27 If a short person wears them,
they shrink accordingly;
and with a tall person,
they become larger.

28 These are marvellous earrings,
they are universally cherished,
celebrated in the three worlds.
You must get me more tangible proof."

SECTION FIFTY-EIGHT

1 Uttaṅka went back to Saudāsa
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
who wished the welfare of his friends
and asked for a sign.
That paragon of the Ikṣvāku dynasty
gave him the required proof.

2 "The way I am is insufferable,"
replied Saudāsa.
"There is no hope for me.
With this sign from me,
I ask you to give him
the jewelled earrings.'"

3 With this message from the king,
Uttaṅka returned
and reported to the queen
what her husband had said.
Immediately on hearing him,
she gave him the earrings.

4 Taking the earrings with him,
Uttaṅka returned
and said to rājā Saudāsa:
"O earth-lord!
Explain to me the mystery
of your words to the queen."

5 "From the day the world was created,"
replied Saudāsa,
"Kṣatriyas have been known
to pūjā-praise Brahmins.
But Kṣatriyas have also often
been very remiss in this matter.

6 I have always praṇāma-ed the twice-born.
Despite my doing so,
I became the victim
of a Brahmin's curse.
I am here, living with Madayantī,
there is no redemption for me.

7 O finest of the twice-born!
No future for me now
except the pleasures of this world
and entry into heaven.

8 But what pleasures of this world
are there for a rājā
who is an enemy of the twice-born,
what happiness in the next world?

9 Which is why I have decided
to give you the earrings.
It is up to you now
to see that you keep your word."

10 "I will keep my word, O rājā,"
replied Uttaṅka.
"I will return, and place myself
entirely in your hands.
One question, however, O foe-scorcher,
I would like to ask."

11 "O learned *vipra*," said Saudāsa,
"ask: I will reply.
I will clarify all your doubts.
Do not hesitate."

12 "Those who have insight into dharma,"
said Uttaṅka,
"emphasise that a *vipra*-Brahmin
disciplines his words.
A person who exploits his friends
is no better than a thief.

13 O bull-brave earth-lord!
You have become my friend today.
Which is why I expect from you
the best possible advice.

14 I have obtained today
all that I came for.
You happen to be a cannibal.
Under the circumstances,
should I return to you or not? –
What is right?"

15 "O finest of all the twice-born,"
replied Saudāsa,
"O incomparable twice-born one,
if you ask me,
I must say the right thing
is not to return to me.

16 O enhancer of Bhṛgu-glory!
That way you will live.
If you return, O *vipra*-Brahmin,
you will die."

17 Armed with this intelligent advice
meant for his welfare,
Uttaṅka took leave of the rājā,
and went back to Ahalyā.

18 Eager to please the wife of his guru,
by giving her the earnings,
Uttaṅka, in a mahā-hurry,
rushed to Gautama's āshram.

19 Exactly as Madayantī had instructed him,
he carefully enclosed
the earrings in the folds
of his black deerskin dress.

20 He set out walking. After some time,
tired and hungry,
he came to a fruiting *bilva*-tree.
Climbing up the tree,

21 O foe-chastiser,
the bull-brave Brahmin Uttaṅka
tied his deerskin on a branch,
and started plucking the fruits.

22 O radiant lord! So intent was he
on plucking the fruits,
he failed to notice that some fruits
dropped on the deerskin

23 In which he had carefully wrapped
the jewelled earrings.
Their heavy impact loosened
the knot on the branch,

24 And the deerskin-dress, and earrings,
fell on the ground.
As the knot-loosened dress flapped
and fell on the ground,

25 A snake came near
the jewelled earrings –
an Airāvata-species serpent –
who swiftly

26 Gripped the earrings in its fangs
and scuttled inside an ant-hill.
Seeing the snake slithering away
with the jewelled earrings,

27 Uttaṅka clambered down the tree,
fearful and furious.
He started jabbing at the ant-hill
with a stick.

28 O Bharata descendant!
That magnificent Brahmin,
spurred by wrath and revenge,
for thirty-five days non-stop
kept poking and jabbing the ant-hill
with his stick,

29 With such intensity that the earth
reeled under his attack.
She despaired. Her body was lacerated
with the stick's jabbing.

30 Furiously he continued the assault,
hoping to clear a path
to the underworld realm
of the Nāga-serpent;

31 And this was when thunderbolt-wielding
Vajrapāṇi-Indra,
the mahā-radiant chief god,
arrived in a chariot
pulled by *hari*-russet horses,
to meet the excellent Brahmin.

32 Sympathising with Uttaṅka's predicament,
Indra, disguised as a Brahmin,
said to Uttaṅka:
"Your plan is unpractical.

33 The realm of the Nāgas
is thousands of *yojanas* from here.
Poking with a stick
will never take you there."

34 "O Brahmin, O finest of the twice-born,"
said Uttaṅka,
"if I do not succeed in retrieving
the earrings
from the Nāga-loka, I will surrender
my *prāṇa* in front of you."

35 When Vajra-pāṇi Indra realised
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
that Uttaṅka was adamant,
he energised
the stick of Uttaṅka
into a thunderbolt-missile.

36 And so it was, O Janamejaya,
that that thunderbolt-energy
sliced a tunnel through the earth
to the realm of the Nāgas.

37 It was through that tunnel
Uttaṅka entered the Nāgaloka,
that spread before him on all sides
for thousands of *yojanas*.

38 O mahā-fortune-favoured-one!
Its fortified walls
were of pure gold, and encrusted
with jewels and diamonds.

39 Countless waterways
with crystal staircases,
rivers rippling
with lucid waters,
and any number of trees
replete with birds . . .

40 The descendant of the Bhārgavas
noticed that the gate
was five *yojanas* tall
and a hundred *yojanas* wide.

41 The spectacle of the Nāgaloka
filled Uttaṅka with despair.
He thought:
I will never find the earrings.

42 O Kaurava Janamejaya!
Suddenly there materialised
a black horse with a white tail
and copper-red eyes –
a horse that seemed
to radiate energy.

43 The horse said to Uttaṅka:
"O *vipra*-Brahman!
Blow hard into my *apāna* anus.
That is the way
you will recover the earrings
from the Airāvata-serpent.

44 Don't think it disgusting,
my son.
You did it often earlier
in Gautama's āshram."

45 "How did I know you
in the āshram of my teacher?
Remind me what I did then,"
said Uttaṅka.

46 "O *vipra*-Brahmin," said the horse,
"you should know
that I am the guru of your guru,
I am the Jātaveda,
the sacred fire-divinity,
the same divinity
to whom you offered pūjā
for the good of your guru –

47 Which was done by you,
O Bhṛgu-nandana,
with a pure heart
as ordained by tradition.
I will do what is good for you.
You will do what I say – now!"

48 Ordered by the fire-god,
Uttaṅka did as told.
Gratified, the deity blazed forth
in all-consuming splendour.

49 O Bharata descendant!
From the deity's pores
there issued a stream of smoke
that engulfed the Nāgaloka.

50 O Bharata mahārāja!
The thick swirling smoke
shrouded the entire Nāga realm
in pitch-black darkness.

51 "Hai! Hai!" wailed the Nāgas
led by Vāsuki
in the land of the Airāvatas,
O Janamejaya.

52 Nothing was visible, O Bharata,
so thick was the smoke.
It was like forests and hills
smothered in mist.

53 Eyes red with smoke-irritation,
terrified by the flames,
the snakes rushed out
to greet the mahātmā
descendant of Bhṛgu
and enquire what was happening.

54 That mahā-energetic mahā-ṛṣi
explained everything.
The terrified Nāgas offered him pūjā
as ordained by tradition.

55 Placing their elders and young ones
in front of them,
the Nāgas offered Uttaṅka *prāñjali*
with bowed heads.
With folded palms, they said:
"*Bhagavan*, favour us."

56 Honouring the Brahmin with *prasāda*-praise,
they washed his feet
with the water of *arghya*-ritual,
and returned the earrings.

57 Having received their pūjā-praise,
illustrious Uttaṅka
circumambulated Agni in *pradakṣina*,
and returned to his guru.

58 Rushing back to Gautama's āshram,
O rājā,
he gave the earrings to his guru's wife,
O defectless one.

59 Then, that finest of the twice-born,
O Janamejaya,
gave to his guru the details
of all that happened
with Vāsuki and the Nāgas
in the Nāgaloka.

60 This is how mahātmā Uttaṅka,
O Janamejaya,
journeyed through the three worlds
to retrieve the earrings.

61 Such was the glorious lustre,
O bull-brave Bharata,
of the muni named Uttaṅka,
such was his great tapasyā.
I have answered in detail
every question you asked me.

SECTION FIFTY-NINE

1 "O finest of the twice-born,"
asked Janamejaya,
"after granting Uttaṅka that boon,
what did Govinda-Krishna,
mahā-illustrious and mahā-muscled,
what did he do next?"

2 After granting Uttaṅka that boon
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
Govinda-Krishna,
accompanied by Sātyaki,
drove to Dvārakā in a chariot
pulled by swift mahā-steeds.

3 Traversing lakes and rivers
and forests and hills,
he arrived in the enchanting city
Dvāravatī-Dvārakā.

4 It was the time, mahārāja,
of the Raivataka festival
when lotus-petal-eyed Krishna
arrived with Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

5 O bull-brave one! *Puruṣarṣabha*!
The Raivataka hill
was a marvel of artistry,
a gem-studded masterpiece.

6 That mahā-mountain glowed
with garlands of gold
and a plethora of flowers
and wish-fulfilling *kalpa-vṛkṣas.*

7 On golden poles gleamed lamps
burning day and night;
bright light shone like the morning sun
in caves and on waterfalls.

8 Lovely flags fluttered everywhere,
with little bells tinkling,
and sweet songs sung by men and women
floated in the air.

9 O Bharata descendant!
Raivataka was a veritable Meru
of glittering gems and jewels.
Happy and excited men and women

10 Sweetened the air with songs
that soared to a skyey heaven.
What a maddening medley
of mellifluous music!

11 The *kilkila*-collation of sounds
made magical that mountain.
Everywhere were food-stalls
and shops stocked with luxuries;

12 Everywhere an abundance of dresses
and garlands and flowers
and the melody of vīṇās
and flutes and *mṛdaṅga*-drums,
everywhere a plenitude
of delicious food and wines,

13 Everywhere gifts handed
to the needy, the blind, and the helpless.
A mahā-mountain festival
of supreme auspiciousness!

14 On the slope of that mountain
were many sanctified dwellings
where pious people lived.
This was the way, O hero,
the Vṛṣṇi heroes celebrated
the Raivataka festival.

15 With all those splendid edifices
the Raivataka mountain
was like a second Devaloka,
a realm of the gods.
O bull-brave Bharata!
As soon as Krishna arrived there,

16 He was received with *stuti*-praise
by gods, gandharvas and ṛṣis.
The gods and gandharvas said:
"You are the guardian of all dharmas,
you are the destroyer of anti-gods.
You are the Creator, you the created,
you are the Cause, you the Support,
you the knower of Dharma and the Vedas!

17 O Deva! O Divine One!
The magic of your māyā
is beyond the mind of man.
Only the maker of māyā
knows the mystery of māyā.
O Parameśvara!
You are the Refuge of all,
O Supreme Lord!

18 O Govinda-Krishna!
O you who are intimate
with Brahmā and other divinities!
O Refuge of all! *Namaḥ*!"

19 With these songs of *stuti*-eulogy
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
the superhuman gods and gandharvas
offered pūjā to Devakī's son.

20 That rājā-of-mountains Raivataka
looked at that time
like the palace of Śakra-Indra.
Receiving the pūjā-praise
of everyone there,
entering a splendid palace,

21 Govinda-Krishna, accompanied by Sātyaki,
made himself comfortable,
planning, with a delighted ātman,
to spend a long time there –

22 Like Vāsava-Indra returning triumphant
after routing the Dānava antigods.
The Vṛṣṇis, Bhojas, Andhakas
and others surged together

23 To honour mahātmā Krishna,
like the gods honouring
hundred-sacrifice-receiving Śatakratu-Indra.
Supremely wise Krishna
reciprocated their welcome
by enquiring about their welfare,

24 After which he paid his respects
to his father and mother.
They lovingly embraced and comforted
mahā-armed Krishna.
Cheerfully, he took his seat,
surrounded by the Vṛṣṇis.

25 After mahā-energetic Krishna
had washed his feet
and refreshed himself,
he replied to the questions
his father asked him
about the mahā-war.

SECTION SIXTY

1 "O Vṛṣṇi descendant!"
said Vasudeva.
"I have heard men saying
the most amazing things
about what happened
in that great battle

2 O mahā-armed one!
You witnessed it personally.
O immaculate one!
Tell me the whole story.

3 What really happened on the field
in that supreme clash
between the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas
and Bhīṣma, Karṇa,
Kṛpa, Droṇa,
and the rest?

4 And what happened to the Kṣatriyas
from so many kingdoms,
all brilliant warriors,
variously dressed,
variously skilled-in-warfare
who challenged each other?"

5 To this request of his father
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
lotus-petal-eyed Puṇḍarīkākṣa-Krishna,
sitting beside his mother,
described how the Kaurava heroes
lost their lives in battle.

6 Such wonderful karma was done
(said Vāsudeva-Krishna)
by those mahātmā Kṣatriyas!
Such multitudinous karma –
it cannot be exhausted
even in thousands of years!

7 I will give the highlights.
Listen carefully,
O my divinely radiant father,
to my brief retelling
of the amazing karma performed
by those earth-lords.

8 Bhīṣma led that magnificant army
of Indra-like Kauravas
comprising eleven *akṣauhiṇīs*,
like Vāsava-Indra.

9 Śikhaṇḍin led a seven-*akṣauhiṇī* force
of the Pāṇḍava army.
Dhīmān-percipient Śikhaṇḍin was protected
by *śrīmān*-radiant Savyasācī-Arjuna.

10 For ten days the battle raged
between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas –
a supremely horripilating carnage
of all those mahātmās.

11 Then Śikhaṇḍin, in a mahā-clash,
helped by the Gāṇḍīva-wielder,
killed Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma, battling bravely,
with a volley of arrows.

12 Sprawled on a bed of arrows,
Bhīṣma like a muni
waited for the *uttarāyaṇa* solstice
before passing away.

13 Brilliant-in-war-weapons heroic Droṇa,
that Indra-like Kaurava general,
was like Kāvya-Śukra himself,
the protector of the Daitya antigods.

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14 Nine remaining *akṣauhiṇīs*, under the command
of Kṛpa and Vṛṣa-Karṇa,
protected that incomparable twice-born hero
who inspired himself and others.

15 Reinforced by Bhīma
like Varuṇa by Mitra,
was mahā-weapons-expert
supremely percipient Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
who was the commander
of the Pāṇḍava forces.

16 The mahā-minded hero,
reinforced by the Pāṇḍavas,
matching his prowess with Droṇa's,
recalled the insults
heaped by Droṇa on his father,
and performed mahā war-karma.

17 They were nearly all wiped out,
the heroes from different lands
who had assembled for battle,
in that Droṇa-Dhṛṣṭadyumna clash.

18 That fast and fierce clash
lasted for five days
until Droṇa, world-weary,
became Dhṛṣṭadyumna's victim.

19 Then Karṇa was appointed general
of Duryodhana's army.
Five remaining Kaurava *akṣauhiṇīs*
were commanded by him.

20 Three *akṣauhiṇīs* of the Pāṇḍavas
were all that were left;
they had lost many brave heroes,
despite Arjuna's protection.

21 The Sūta's son Karṇa,
a valiant warrior,
at the end of the second day
clashed with Pārtha-Arjuna,
and perished like a moth
in a fire.

22 The death of Karṇa
debilitated the Kauravas.
Their last three *akṣauhiṇīs*
protected the Madra-leader.

23 With so many vehicles destroyed,
the Pāṇḍava army
of one *akṣauhiṇī,* under Yudhiṣṭhira,
became dispirited.

24 In the battle that followed,
that afternoon,
the Kuru-rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
brilliantly killed the Madra-rājā.

25 After Śalya was killed,
mahātmā Sahadeva
killed Śakuni, who began
and fanned all this bitterness.

26 After the death of Śakuni,
rājā Duryodhana,
on the verge of nervous collapse
after his army's rout,
armed with his mace,
escaped from the battlefield.

27 Infuriated, the illustrious Bhīmasena
tracked him down
where he lay in hiding,
submerged in Lake Dvaipāyana.

28 The surviving Pāṇḍava warriors
surrounded the lake.
They were delighted
seeing Duryodhana in the lake.

[XIV:60:29-34]

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29 Their words like arrows
sliced through the water
and pierced Duryodhana,
who rose with his mace,
prepared to fight
the taunting Pāṇḍavas.

30 The son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
rājā Duryodhana,
in a mahā duel witnessed
by the earth-lords,
was killed by Bhīmasena
who fought brilliantly.

31 After this, the remaining Pāṇḍavas
were slaughtered in their sleep
by Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
avenging the killing of his father.

32 Their sons are dead.
Their warriors are dead.
Their allies are dead.
Only the five sons of Pāṇḍu
are still alive –
and I, and Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

33 Kṛpa, the Bhoja Kṛtavarman,
and Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman
survive from the Kaurava army.
Yuyutsu of the Kauravas
has also survived,
because he joined the Pāṇḍavas.

34 The Indra-like Kaurava
Suyodhana-Duryodhana –
and his friends and relatives –
are all dead.
Vidura and Sañjaya
are with Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

35 The battle lasted, O *prabhu*-lord,
for eighteen days.
Many earth-lords who perished
are now in heaven."

36 Mahārāja! (continued Vaiśampāyana)
This horripilating account
plunged the listening Vṛṣṇis
in deep despair and depression.

SECTION SIXTY-ONE

1 Illustrious Vāsudeva-Krishna
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
narrated the Mahābhārata war details
to his father,

2 Deliberately omitting mention
of the killing of Abhimanyu.
Heroic, mahā-minded Krishna
did not want
his father Vasudeva to be upset
by unpleasant news,

3 For which reason, to save him
deep despair and depression,
mahā-minded Krishna refrained
from any reference
to the fearful death of the son
of Vasudeva's daughter Subhadrā.

4 But Subhadrā noticed that the death
of her son was not mentioned,
and she said to her brother:
"Krishna, tell us
about Saubhadra-Abhimanyu's death."
She said this, and fainted.

5 Vasudeva saw his daughter
fall senseless on the floor.
Instantly, he also, grief-shocked,
fell on the floor.

6 But he quickly recovered, mahārāja,
from the depression
over the death of his daughter's son,
and he said to Krishna:

7 "Lotus-eyed Puṇḍarīkākṣa-Krishna!
You are renowned for truth-speaking.

8 O foe-exterminator!
Why did you hide from me
the death of my daughter's son?
Prabhu-lord!
Tell me all about how
your sister's son was killed.

9 O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna!
His eyes were like your eyes.
How did his enemies
kill him on the battlefield?
They say a man dies only
when called by killing Kāla,

10 Why is why my heart has not shattered
into a hundred pieces.
Before dying, what did he have to say
to you – and to his mother?

11 O lotus-petal-eyed Krishna!
My quick-glancing son,
my loved one, did he have anything
to say to me?
He was not killed with his back
to his enemies, was he?

12 O Govinda-Krishna!
His face did not lose colour,
did it, during the battle?
What mahā-energy
that boy possessed, O Krishna,
what self-confidence!

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13 It was childish of him,
but often in my presence
he praised his own prowess.
Deceitfully killed
by Droṇa, Karṇa, Kṛpa and others,
that young man

14 Now lies sprawled on the field –
tell me, Keśava-Krishna!
Droṇa, Bhīṣma, and Karṇa –
that finest of mighty warriors –

15 My daughter's son
dared to challenge them all."
Despairing in this manner,
bewildered by grief,

16 Was Krishna's father Vasudeva;
and Govinda-Krishna,
even more afflicted, said to him:
"His face never paled.
He never turned his back
on the battlefield.

17 It was a horrendous clash,
but he never turned his back.
He slaughtered hundreds of thousands
of earth-lords;

18 Then, harassed by Droṇa and Karṇa,
he was killed by Duḥśāsana's son.
Prabhu-lord! If they had fought
with him one by one,

19 Even thunderbolt-wielding Indra
could not have defeated him.
The *saṁśaptaka* suicide-squads
lured Pārtha-Arjuna away,

20 Exposing Abhimanyu
to the fury of Droṇa
leading the Kaurava heroes.
That was the time, father,
when he killed in battle
so many of his enemies.

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21 Before succumbing, O Vārṣṇeya,
to Duḥśāsana's son.
Crush your grief, O mahā-minded one,
he is now in heaven:

22 People with *buddhi*-discrimination
do not collapse in a crisis.
Whom Droṇa and Karṇa and others
could not face singly –

23 Though they were the equals
of Mahendra-Indra himself –
why will he not find heaven?
O my difficult-to-overcome father!
Crush this grief,
control your anger.

24 The destroyer-of-enemy-cities
Parapuraṁjaya-Abhimanyu
has attained the sacred realm
of all who fall on the field,
purified by a war-weapons death.
The death of that hero
made my sister Subhadrā,
bewildered by grief,

25 Scream, beside her dead son,
like a *kurarī*-osprey,
and she turned to Draupadī
and poured out her pain:

26 '*Ārye*! Gracious lady!
Where are all our sons?
I want to see them.'
The Kaurava ladies heard her,

27 And they embraced her, and wept,
and they sat around her

28 And then she asked Uttarā:
'*Bhadre*! Fortune-favoured one!
Where is your husband?
Hurry, tell him I am here.

29 Daughter of Virāṭa!
He was always the first
to greet me when he heard my voice.
Why is your husband avoiding me today?

30 O Abhimanyu!
Your maternal uncles,
all those mahā-chariot-heroes –
they are all well.
They all want to know
how you are faring on the field.

31 O foe-chastiser!
Tell me what happened!
Why don't you speak to me?
Look at my tears!'

32 Herself depressed with grief,
Pṛthā-Kuntī heard
the pitiful lament of Vārṣṇeya-Subhadrā,
and gently consoled her, saying:

33 'Vāsudeva-Krishna and Sātyaki
protected him,
and so did his own father,
but your young son,
so deeply loved, died nonetheless.
Such is Kāla-dharma.

34 O daughter of the Yādavas!
Yadu-nandinī!
Mortal dharma rules mankind.
But do not grieve.
Your battle-brave son has attained
the supreme fulfilment.

35 You were born in a noble family
of Kṣatriya mahātmās.
O grief-glance-glistening girl!
Discard your grief.
O lotus-petal-eyed one!
Do not weep.

36 *Śubhe*! Gracious girl!
You have Uttarā here,
your lovely daughter-in-law
pregnant with Abhimanyu's son.'

37 O enhancer of Yādava glory!
Consoling Subhadrā,
Kunti overcame her own deep grief,
and started preparatious
for the *śrāddha* ceremony
of Abhimanyu.

38 Instructing rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma,
and the twins
who were as powerful as Yama,
she gave liberal gifts

39 To Brahmins, of wealth and cows;
then, O glorious Yādava,
Vārṣṇeyī-Kuṇṭī said
to Vairāṭī-Uttarā:

40 'O faultless lovely-hipped lady
of the Virāṭa dynasty!
Do not grieve. Think of your husband,
and cherish your body.'

41 O mahā-radiant lord!
Kuntī said this, and kept silent.
With her permission,
I have brought Subhadrā here.

42 O bestower of honour! *Mānada*!
You know now
how your daughter's son was killed.
But do not grieve.
Do not succumb to sorrow,
O irresistible one."

SECTION SIXTY-TWO

1 The Śūra-descendant Vasudeva
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
dharmātmā Vasudeva heard his son,
gave up his grief,
and made the perfect preparations
for the *śrāddha*-ritual.

2 And Vāsudeva-Krishna also
performed the *ūrdha-dehika* rites
of ascension-to-heaven
of his mahātmā nephew,
the dearly loved grandson
of Vasudeva.

3 Sixty lakh mahā-energetic Brahmins
were feasted by him
with every kind of delicacy
pampering the palate.

4 It was a horripilating spectacle –
the thirst for wealth
of all those mahā-muscled Brahmins
satiated by Krishna's generosity!

5 Loaded with gold, cattle,
luxurious beds, and robes,
the *vipra*-Brahmins chanted
loud blessings on Krishna.

6 Then Vasudeva of the Dāśārhas
and Baladeva-Balarama,
Satyaka and Sātyaki
performed Abhimanyu's *śrāddha.*

7 They were profoundly depressed;
peace of mind eluded them,
as it did the Pāṇḍava heroes
in the Elephant City Hastināpura.

8 Deprived of Abhimanyu,
they were deprived of *śānti.*
O Indra-among-rājās!
For many days,
the daughter of Virāṭa
fasted completely,

9 Refusing to eat anything,
such was her mahā-grief
over the death of her husband.
People started fearing
for the health of the baby
in her womb.

10 Intuiting her condition with the power
of spiritual insight,
wise Vyāsa arrived there, and spoke
to large-eyed Pṛthā-Kuntī,

11 Indeed mahā-radiant Vyāsa
said also to Uttarā:
"You must give up your grief!
A mahā-radiant son
will soon be born to you,
O illustrious lady! *Yaśasvinī*!

12 With Vāsudeva-Krishna's grace and glory,
with my blessings,
that son of yours will rule the earth
after the Pāṇḍavas."

13 Then, O Bharata descendant,
within the hearing
of dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
he glanced
at Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
and delighted him, saying:

14 "O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
Your grandson
will be a mahā-minded prince.
He will rule with dharma
this entice earth
from sea to sea.

15 Therefore, O finest of the Kauravas,
discard your grief.
O foe-exterminator!
I speak the truth.

16 O descendant of the Kauravas!
The valiant Vṛṣṇi hero
Krishna predicted this long ago.
It cannot not happen.

17 Abhimanyu has attained the undecaying,
invincible celestial realm
by the power of his prowess.
There is no need for you
to grieve for him
or any other Kaurava hero."

18 Mahārāja! These words of Vyāsa,
his *pitāmaha* grandfather,
made dharmātmā Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
discard his grief;
indeed, he seemed to become
his normal cheerful self.

19 O dharma-knowing mahā-minded one!
Your father Parīkṣit
waxed in the womb of his mother
like the bright-fortnight moon.

20 Then, after advising Dharma's son,
king Yudhiṣṭhira
to start the Aśvamedha Horse-Sacrifice,
Vyāsa mysteriously vanished.

21 *Tāta*! O respected one!
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
respecting the advice
of his grandfather Vyāsa,
made up his mind to amass
the riches required for the ritual.

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SECTION SIXTY-THREE

1 "O Brahmin," said Janamejaya,
"what did Yudhiṣṭhira do
after listening to the advice
regarding the Aśvamedha
imparted to him
by mahātmā Vyāsa?

2 O finest of the twice-born!
How was he able
to gather the underground wealth
hidden by Marutta?"

3 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
listened to the advice
of island-born Dvaipāyana Vyāsa,
and arranged a conveniently timed meeting
of the brothers – saying

4 To Arjuna, Bhīmasena,
and Mādrī's twin sons:
"The well-wishing words of the mahātmā
spoken for the heroes

5 Of the Kaurava dynasty –
wise Krishna's advice you have heard.
Deep-in-prolonged-tapasyā,
our mahā well-wisher,

6 Our devoted-to-dharma guru Vyāsa,
Bhīṣma of marvellous karma,
and percipient Govinda-Krishna –
they have spoken! O mahā-wise Pāṇḍavas,

7 I would like to implement
every advice they have given,
for that would surely lead us
to great good fortune.

8 The words of so profound
a Brahma-breather as Vyāsa
can only increase our welfare.
O enhancers of Kaurava glory!
The earth has been systematically
denuded of her riches.

9 Vyāsa has graciously informed us
of Marutta's secreted wealth
in order to help us, O kings.
If you feel that wealth
is what we need now,
and that we can find it,

10 By using dharma, of course,
then let us do something.
What do you think, Bhīma?"
O enhancer of Kaurava glory!
Hearing these words
of king Yudhiṣṭhira,

11 Bhīma folded his palms in *prāñjali*
before that incomparable king,
and said: "O mahā-muscled one!
What you have said makes me happy –

12 And what Vyāsa has advised
on this subject of riches.
Prabhu-lord! If we can obtain
the wealth of Āvikṣita-Marutta,

13 All our problems are solved, mahāraja.
This is what I think.
Let us go and pay homage
to mahātmā Girīśa,

14 The matted-haired deity Kapardin.
Bhadraṁ te! May you prosper!
The wealth of Deva-deveśa-Śiva
the god-above-all-gods –
if he and all his followers
and adoring companions

15 Are gratified by us
in thought, word, and karma –
that wealth will then be ours.
And the horrendous-visaged
Kinnara What-Men
who guard that treasure

16 Will surely give in to us
if the bull-bannered deity
Vṛṣa-dhvaja Śiva is gratified.
That serene-ātmaned deity
Parameśvara-Śiva,
on his bhaktas

17 Bestows even immortality.
The *prabhu*-lord will not deny us
the gift of gold.
Pleased with Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
in a forest, he gifted
the mahā-missiles
Pāśupata, Raudra and Brahmaśira.
He will not refuse us wealth.

18 O Kaurava dynasty descendants!
We are all his *bhaktas*
and he is pleased with us.
It is by his grace
we have been able
to recover our kingdom.

19 When, after Abhimanyu's slaughter,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna vowed
to kill Jayadratha, at night
in a dream, Loka-guru

20 Śiva was propitiated by him,
accompanied by Keśava-Krishna,
and he obtained a celestial weapon.
Night passed, and in the morning,
protecting Phālguna-Arjuna,
prabhu-lord Śiva

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21 With his *śūla*-trident
accomplished the rout the enemy army –
witnessed by Savyasācī-Arjuna.
Mahārāja! Who can think of defeating

22 Such brilliant mahā-bowmen
as Droṇa and Karṇa
except Bahu-rūpa Multi-Formed
Maheśvara-Śiva,
the trident-wielding deity
of superlative prowess?

23 His divine grace alone
has eliminated your enemies.
He will ensure the success
of the Aśvamedha ritual."

24 These words of Bhīma, O Bharata,
delighted Dharma's son
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.
Arjuna also, O Bharata, approved,
and the others, saying:
"So be it, then."

25 Making up their minds
to obtain that treasure,
the Pāṇḍavas set out
on the auspicious day,
of the Dhruva-star-conjunction
of the three Uttarās and Rohiṇī.

26 Brahmins chanted *svasti*-benedictions
on the Pāṇḍavas
as they embarked on their journey
after propitiating
Sura-śreṣṭha Maheśvara
the lord-of-gods Śiva.

27 With *modaka*-sweets,
pāyasa swetened rice-and-milk,
and meat offerings,
the Pāṇḍavas gratified
Mahātmā Śiva,
and cheerfully set out.

28 The citizens and many Brahmins
followed them as they left,
happily invoking success
by chanting blossings.

29 The Pāṇḍavas respectfully half-circled
the Brahmins in *pradakṣiṇa* –
the Brahmins who lit
the sacred fires –
and set out from the city
after praṇāma-ing them.

30 They left after taking the permission
of rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra
and his queen Gāndhārī
still mourning their dead sons,
and the pemission also
of large-eyed Pṛthā-Kuntī.

31 Ensuring that the Kaurava descendant,
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Yuyutsu
stayed back in the capital,
the pure-vowed Pāṇḍava heroes,
left, blessed by the pūjā-praise
of profoundly learned Brahmins.

SECTION SIXTY-FOUR

1 They proceeded cheerfully
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
with a confident retinue
and animals and vehicles.
The mahā-chatter of their wheels
reverberated in the sky.

2 Sūtas and Māgadhas and Vandis
sang their *stuti*-praises.
Their soldiers ringed them like sunrays
surrounding the sun.

3 Like the rājā of the sky
on a full-moon night
of Paurṇamāsya
shone Yudhiṣṭhira
with a white umbrella
canopying his head.

4 That finest of men,
bull-brave Yudhiṣṭhira,
the eldest son of Pāṇḍu,
as ordained by tradition,
acknowledged the victory-blessings
of his estatic subjects.

5 And the *hala-hala* hubbub
of his warriors, O rājā,
accompanied rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
and echoed in the sky.

6 Crossing lakes and rivers
and forests and groves,
they arrived, mahārāja,
at the foot of a mountain,

7 The site of the priceless treasure,
O Indra-among-rājās.
Here, O excellent Bharata,
Yudhiṣṭhira pitched his camp.
The Pāṇḍava rājā selected
a level stretch of ground,

8 Placing at the procession's head
such Brahmins,
O Kaurava descendant,
as excelled in tapasyā,
learning and self-discipline,
and the *purohita* proficient
in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas –
Āgniveśya-Dhaumya himself –

9 After which many rājās,
Brahmins and *yajña*-priests
performed the *śānti*-ceremony
as ordained by tradition,
with rājā Yudhiṣṭhira in the centre
of an assembly of ministers.

10 A camp organised by the twice-born
had arrangements
for six roads in nine sections
for the entry
of such Indra-like musth elephants
of the army

11 As escorted the large concourse.
Indra-among-rājās Yudhiṣṭhira
said to the Brahmins:
"O finest of the *vipra*-saints!
Decide on an auspicious day
and an auspicious *nakṣatra*

12 For the task you have planned.
Let no time be wasted
in waiting or loitering.
Our need is urgent.

13 O Indra-like *vipra*-saints!
Decide, and act!"
Listening to rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
the *purohita* Brahmins,
to please the Dharmarāja,
replied happily:

14 "Today itself
is the day auspicious,
bringing *puṇya*-merit,
the perfect *nakṣatra*.
O Indra-among-men!
Today we will subsist
on water alone.
You also today
should observe a fast."

15 Heeding the advice
of the excellent twice-born,
the Indras-among-men
Pāṇḍavas fasted;
they relaxed on beds
of sacred kuśa-grass;
lying there, they glowed
radiant, like the fires
of a Hutāśana ritual.

16 And so the night passed,
with the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas
listening to the Brahmins.
At crack of clean dawn,
the bull-brave twice-born
approached Dharma's royal son.

SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

1 The Brahmins said:
"Offer your homage, O king,
to mahātmā Tryambaka
Three-Eyed Śiva.
When that is accomplished,
our needs will be granted."

2 The words of the Brahmins
prompted Yudhiṣṭhira
to offer sacred homage
to Girīśa-Śiva.

3 His *purohita* prepared *caru*-offerings
as ordained by tradition
and gratified the sacred fire
with mantra-chanted libations.

4 With sweetmeats, *pāyasa*
and meat offerings,
with mantra-purified flower-gifts,
O lord of men,

5 With fried paddy and other homage,
was the deity revered
by the wise-in-the-Vedas,
steeped-in-tradition *purohita.*

6 To the *kiṁkara*-followers of Śiva
he offered special *bali*,
and to the Indra-of-yakṣas Kubera,
and Maṇibhadra also.

7 To the other yakṣas and *bhūtas*,
he offered fruit, *kṛsara*,
sesame seeds and meat –
the *nivāpa* homage.

8 Then the *purohita* made offerings
of rice-filled bowls.
The earth-lords gifted the Brahmins
with thousands of cows.

9 *Bali*-offerings were also made
to the night-wanderers.
What an enchanting spectacle –
the flower-and-incense-sweet

10 Homage, paid, O lord of the earth,
to Devadeva-Śiva!
After the pūjā-worship
of Rudra-Śiva and his Gaṇas,

11 King Yudhiṣṭhira, placing Vyāsa
at the head of the procession,
proceeded to the site of the treasure.
There, he pujā-worshipped
the lord-of-wealth Dhanādyakṣa-Kubera,
praṇāma-ing him

12 With offerings of sweets and *kṛsara*;
after which,
Śaṅkha and other Nidhis
and Nidhipālas

13 Were also adored by him,
along with the twice-born there
who chanted *svasti*-benedictions
on the valiant king.
Empowered by their blessings,
the energetic

14 Finest-of-the-Kauravas Yudhiṣṭhira
happily ordered
the treasure to be excavated.
What a wonderful variety
of exquisitely-shaped vessels
emerged from the place –

15 Thousands of *bhṛṅgāras*, *kaṭāhas*,
kalāśa-pots, *vardhamānas*,
and a plethora of *bhājanas*
of intricate workmanship.

16 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
arranged for the removal of the treasure
in large wooden *karapuṭa* chests
specially crafted for the transfer.

17 O rājā! O king!
The chests were balanced
in two equal divisions
on the backs of animals
and other modes of conveyance,
O lord of the world.

18 Sixty thousand camels,
a hundred and twenty thousand horses,
and elephants, mahārāja,
a hundred thousand;

19 A hundred thousand carts,
a hundred thousand she-elephants;
as for mules and men,
a countless multitude.

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20 The treasure excavated by Yudhiṣṭhira
totalled, indeed,
sixteen crore eight lakh
and twentyfour thousand gold *bhāras.*

21 Loading the carriages and animals
with all that wealth,
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira revered Mahādeva-Śiva,
and towards the Elephant City

22 Prepared his return journey,
with Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa
and his family *purohita* Dhaumya
heading the procession.
Bull-brave Yudhiṣṭhira
planned convenient *goyuta*-marches
of two *krośas* each
during the return trip.

23 O rājā! that mahā-procession,
loaded with priceless wealth,
arrived in the capital, delighting
the hearts of those glorious Kauravas.

SECTION SIXTY-SIX

1 In the meantime (continued Vaiśampāyana),
valiant Vāsudeva-Krishna,
with a group of Vṛṣṇis,
arrived in Hastināpura.

2 As requested by Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
before he left for Dvārakā,
bull-brave Krishna returned to the capital
in time for the Vājimedha Horse-Sacrifice.

3 Accompanying him
were Rukmiṇī's son Pradyumna,
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki, Sāmba,
Gada, Kṛtavarman,

4 Valiant Sāraṇa, Niśaṭha
and Ulmuka.
Baladeva-Balarāma led the party,
which escorted Subhadrā.

5 To meet Draupadī, Uttarā
and Pṛthā-Kuntī,
and to comfort and console
the other Kṣatriya-ladies
who had lost their husbands –
was Krishna's objective.

6 *Mahīpati* earth-lord Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
informed of their arrival,
with mahā-minded Vidura at his side,
welcomed them warmly.

7 Mahā-energetic Puruṣottama-Krishna,
finest of men,
revered by Vidura and Yuyutsu,
stayed back in the capital.

8 The stay of those valiant Vṛṣṇis
in the city, O Janamejaya,
coincided with the birth
of rājā Parīkṣit,
yours illustrious father,
an exterminator of enemies.

9 Struck by the Brahma-missile,
rājā Parīkṣit was still-born.
His birth, mahārāja,
was at once delight and horror.

10 What leonine roars of joy
rose from the citizens!
The ten directions reverberated.
Then, suddenly, complete silence.

11 Deeply troubled in mind and heart,
Krishna, with Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
quickly went to the *antāhpura*,
the palace's inner apartments.

12 He saw his paternal aunt Kuntī,
weeping profusely,
rushing towards him, wailing,
"Vāsudeva! Vāsudeva!"

13 O king! Trailing her were Draupadī
and illustrious Subhadrā,
and a host of wailing wives
of the relatives of the Pāṇḍavas.

14 O rāja-*śārdūla*! O tiger-brave rājā!
Kuntibhoja's daughter Kuntī,
tears streaming down her cheeks,
said to Krishna:

15 "O mahā-muscled Vāsudeva-Krishna!
Because she had you as son,
Devakī is the peerless mother!
You are our hope,
you are our refuge,
you are our family's protector!

16 O Yadu-vīra! O Yādava hero!
Prabhu-lord!
Here is your sister's still-born baby,
killed by Aśvatthāman.
O Kesava-Krishna!
Bring him back to life!

17 O joy of the Kauravas!
Kaurava-nandana!
You vowed this, O *prabhu*-lord,
did you not,
'I will breathe life back
into her dead baby.'

18 O bull-brave Keśava-Krishna!
Tāta! Our dear one!
This is the dead body!
Look at him, Mādhava-Krishna!
Have some feeling for Uttarā
and Subhadrā and Draupadī – and me!

19 O irresistible one! *Durdharṣa*!
And also for Dharma's son,
Bhīma, Phālguna-Arjuna,
Nakula and Sahadeva!
Redeem all of us
with your compassion!

20 The *prāṇa* life-breaths of the Pāṇḍavas
and my own *prāṇa*
are locked in this little one!
O Dāśārha descendant!
The *piṇḍa*-offerings to the spirit
of my husband Pāṇḍu
and my father-in-law
depend on this little one.

21 *Bhadraṁ te*, Janārdana-Krishna!
May you be blessed!
Handsome Abhimanyu, so like you,
so dear to your heart –
I beg of you –
do what is best for him.'

22 O vanquisher of enemies!
Again and again
Uttarā keeps repeating the words
of Abhimanyu –
words, Krishna, very dear to her.
No question of that!

23 O Dāśārha descendant!
The son of Arjuna
said to the daughter of Virāṭa:
'*Bhadre*! Fortunate lady!
Your son will go
to my maternal uncles,

24 The Vṛṣṇis and the Andhakas,
and learn from them
the wonders of Dhanurveda archery,
the art of war-weapons,
the *sāstra* of politics,
and *kevala* spiritual insight.'

25 *Tāta*! Our dear one!
    That destroyer of fierce foes,
irresistible Abhimanyu,
    because he dearly loved her,
said this to Uttarā.
    O make it come true!

26 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
    We *praṇāma* you
and we beg of you –
    for the welfare of the Kauravas,
for their supreme good,
    make his words come true!"

27 Saying this to Vārṣṇeya-Krishna,
    large-lovely-eyed Pṛthā-Kuntī
raised her arms high
    above her head,
and she and the other ladies
    swayed and fell on the ground.

28 *Prabhu*-lord! Mahārāja!
    Their eyes bleary with tears,
they kept repeating:
    "He is dead! He is dead!
The son of Vārṣṇeya-Krishna's nephew
    is born dead!"

29 O Bharata descendant!
    Kuntī finished speaking.
Janārdana-Krishna helped her up,
    and consoled her.

SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN

1 Kuntī sat up (continued Vaiśampāyana),
    Subhadrā stared
at her brother Krishna,
    and wailed in agony:

2 "O lotus-petal-eyed Krishna!
look at the brilliant grandson
of Pārtha-Arjuna!
All the Kauravas killed –
and he, the last of them,
fated to die at birth!

3 The blade of grass hurled
by Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
to kill Bhīmasena
has fallen on Uttarā,
on Vijaya-Arjuna,
and on me.

4 It is stuck in my heart,
O irresistible Keśava-Krishna,
this blade of grass,
for nowhere do I see
around me my son Abhimanyu
nor my grandson.

5 What will Yudhiṣṭhira say –
the dharmātmā dharmarāja?
What will Bhīma and Arjuna say?
And Mādravatī's two sons?

6 O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna!
Abhimanyu's son born dead!
All the Pāṇḍavas desolated
by Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman!

7 He was the absolute darling
of the Pāṇḍava brothers, Krishna-
Ruined by Aśvatthāman's weapon,
how will they explain what happened?

8 O Janārdana-Krishna!
O exterminator of enemies!
What greater grief than this –
the death of a son like Abhimanyu?

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9 Purușottama-Krishna!
I bow my head before you,
and I seek your grace.
Look at them both,
standing in front of you:
Pṛthā-Kuntī and Draupadī.

10 O foe-crushing Mādhava-Krishna!
When Droṇa's son
threatened to kill the babies
in the wombs
of the Pāṇḍava ladies,
you warned Aśvatthāman:

11 'Brahma-bandho! You foul Brahmin!
Vilest of scoundrels!
I will frustrate your plan.
I will revive
the still-born grandson
of diadem-decked Arjuna.'

12 O irresistible one!
That was your promise.
I know you have the power.
I seek your grace.
Restore life
to the son of Abhimanyu!

13 O tiger-brave Vṛṣṇi!
If you fail to keep
your sacred word,
I will take my own life.

14 O valiant one!
O irresistible one!
What good will I be to you,
or you to me,
if the son of Abhimanyu
is not alive?

15 O irresistible Krishna!
That is why I beg of you:
Bring back to life
the son of Abhimanyu,
like a withered rice-field
fed by a rain-cloud.

16 You are a truth-speaking dharmātmā,
O Keśava-Krishna;
truly illustrious is your prowess.
O foe-chastiser!
See that you honour the truth
of the words you speak.

17 If you so wish,
you can give life back
to the three worlds, should they die.
And this darling nephew,
your sister's stillborn baby –
how can you fail him?

18 Your power and your glory –
I know well, Krishna.
And that is why I ask.
Be gracious with Pāṇḍu's sons.

19 O mahā-muscled one!
Have compassion for Utarā –
and for me, your own sister.
Have compassion
for a mother mourning a son,
seeking your grace."

SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT

1 O Indra-among-rājās!
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
Deeply troubled by Subhadrā's words,
Keśini-crushing Krishna
assured her "*Tatheti*! So be it!"
He spoke with confidence.

[XIV:68:2-9]

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2 Bull-brave Krishna's words
pleased the entire assembly:
they were like cool water
soothing a sweat-soaked sufferer.

3 O tiger-among-men!
Quickly he entered the birth-room
of your father Parīkṣit,
fragrant with white flowers;

4 And decorated on all four sides
with filled-to-the-brim water-pots,
and sanctified with *tinduka*-sticks
soaked in ghee,
and sprinkled with mustard-seeds,
O mahā-armed one.

5 Small fires on all sides
and shining weapons graced the room,
and elderly lady-attendants
waited to perform any service.

6 O stable-minded one!
Expert physicians were present also.
Energetic Krishna noticed
rākṣasa-influence-nullifying articles

7 Arranged as ordained by tradition
plentifully in the room.
Seeing the birth-room of your father
thus protected and sanctified,

8 Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna was delighted.
"*Sadhu*! *Sadhu*! Excellent! Excellent!"
Even as Vārṣṇeya-Krishna
happily praised the arrangements,

9 Draupadī arrived there suddenly,
and said to Uttarā,
the daughter of Virāṭa:
"*Bhadre*! Fortunate lady!
He is here, your father-in-law
Madhusūdana-Krishna,

10 The Purāṇa-ṛṣi of ineffable ātman,
the Invincible Aparājita!"
Hearing this, controlling her sobbing,
and draping her dress gracefully,

11 Devī Uttarā waited for Krishna,
as one would for a deity.
That lady of tapasyā,
heart stricken by sorrow,

12 Saw Govinda-Krishna,
and moaned her anguish:
"O lotus-eyed Janārdana-Krishna!
Look – both of us!
Both of us are dead –
Abhimanyu and I.

13 O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna!
O valiant Madhu-han Krishna!
I bow my head before you,
and I seek your grace.
Revive my stillborn baby
consumed by Aśvatthāman's weapon!

14 Why could Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
or Bhīmasena,
or you, O lotus-petal-eyed Krishna,
not have said then,

15 O *prabhu*-lord: 'Let the grass-blade
waste a sense-lost mother!'
I would have been destroyed,
he would have been saved.

16 What good did this vicious deed do
to the son of Droṇa –
wasting an innocent womb-child
with his Brahma-missile?

17 O waster-of-enemies!
O Govinda-Krishna!
I am that same mother
bowing her head before you.
If you do not revive my baby,
I will kill myself.

18 O Sādhu Keśava-Krishna
What hopes I had of him!
All crushed by Droṇa's son!
What life is left for me now?

19 O Janārdana-Krishna!
O punisher of impious perpetrators!
With my baby in my lap,
I had so looked forward
to revering you richly.
How can I, O Keśava-Krishna?

20 O bull-brave Krishna!
With the murder of our heir,
quick-glancing Abhimanyu,
all my dreams have been shattered.

21 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
Quick-glancing Abhimanyu –
you loved him dearly, did you not?
Look at him now –
my poor little baby,
consumed by the Brahmāstra!

22 Ungrateful one! Cruel one! –
Just like his father,
leaving his prospering Pāṇḍava family
and going to the realm of Yama!

23 I took a vow, Keśava-Krishna,
'Valiant Abhimanyu! –
if you perish in battle,
I will join you in death.'

24 But I love life, Krishna,
and I did not keep my vow.
See how selfish and heartless I am!
If I go to him now,
what reply will I give
to Phālguni-Abhimanyu?"

SECTION SIXTY-NINE

1 Groaning-with-grief *tapasvinī* Uttarā
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
yearning for her baby's life,
slumped senseless on the ground.

2 Kuntī and the other Bharata ladies,
seeing the son-less girl
asprawl on the ground,
burst into loud lamentation.

3 O Indra-among-rājās!
The mahā-miserable moaning of the women
transformed the Pāṇḍava palace
into an unbearable and unlivable place.

4 O valiant Indra-among-rājās!
Virāṭa's daughter Uttarā
seemed to be in a state
of impossible despair.

5 But she regained her senses,
O bull-brave Bharata,
and placing her baby in her lap
she whispered:

6 "You are the son of a father
wise-in-the-ways-of-dharma.
Why are you guilty of adharma –
why are you refusing
to honour the supreme Vṛṣṇi warrior
standing in front of you?

7 My son, when you meet your father
in the other world,
tell him from me: 'Terrible is untimely death
for a living creature.

8 Why am I still alive,
without my husband, without my son?
I should be dead,
ill-omened, useless me!'

9 O mahā-armed one!
I will swallow poison,
I will throw myself
in a flaming death,
I will go to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
and get his permission.

10 *Tāta*! O respected one!
Death is very difficult indeed
for a living being –
for look, I am still alive,
without a husband,
without a son!

11 Rise, my little baby son,
and see your suffering grandmother,
groaning with grief,
sunk in a sea of sorrow.

12 See the āryā-noble Pāñcāla princess
and the Sātvati *tapasvinī* lady!
And look at me, pierced with pain
like a deer by a hunter's arrow.

13 Rise, my little baby son,
and see the lotus-petal-eyed,
quick-glancing-like-Abhimanyu
gifted-with-wisdom Krishna!"

14 The ladies heard the lamentation
of Uttarā,
and they helped her up,
and made her sit up.

15 The daughter of the Matsya-lord
joined her palms in *prāñjali*
and touching the earth,
she faced lotus-petal-eyed Krishna.

16 So moved by her agony
was bull-brave Krishna
that he touched water and nullified
the fatal Brahma-missile.

17 Krishna of the Dāśārhas,
the pure-ātmaned hero
of undiminishing lustre,
true to his promise
to revive the baby,
announced before the whole world:

18 "I never speak a lie.
My words will come true.
Look, with everyone as witness,
the child is alive!

19 I have never said a lie,
not even lightheartedly,
never turned my back in battle.
So let this baby live!

20 Dearly do I cherish dharma,
dearly I cherish Brahma-knowers.
So let him live again –
Abhimanyu's dead son!

21 Never has there been a rift
between Vijaya-Arjuna and me.
This is the truth –
so let the child live!

22 Because truth and dharma
are always stable in me –
so let him live again –
the dead son of Abhimanyu!

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23 With the power of dharma
I killed Kaṁsa and Keśī.
This is the truth –
so let the child live!"

24 O bull-brave Bharata mahārāja!
Vāsudeva-Krishna said this.
The child stirred
with the first signs of life.

SECTION SEVENTY

1 The *tejas*-radiance of your father
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
illuminated the birth-room
when Krishna nullified the Brahmāstra.

2 The rākṣasas in the room fled,
forsaking their destructive power.
A voice in sky-space exclaimed:
"*Śādhu*! *Sādhu*! O Keśava-Krishna!"

3 The fiery missile sped back
to Pitāmaha Brahmā,
and *prāṇa* life-breath, O lord of men,
revived in your father.

4 And the baby stirred, O rājā,
with fresh-infused vigour,
and joy filled the hearts
of the Bharata ladies.

5 Instructed by Govinda-Krishna,
the Brahmins chanted blessings,
and all assembled there
praised Janārdana-Krishna.

6 The wives of all those
lion-like Bharata warriors –
Kuntī, Drupada's daughter, Uttarā –
like boat-rescued drowning sailors –

7 And other lion-brave heroes' wives
rejoiced at the resuscitation.
And wrestlers, actors, *granthikā*-astrologers
and joy-providers in the palace,

8 With Sūtas and Māgadha-eulogists
paeaned Janārdana-Krishna
with chants, O bull-brave Bharata,
glorifying the Kaurava dynasty.

9 And Uttarā slowly stood up,
O Bharata descendant,
taking her time,
and, holding her baby,
she happily offered homage
to Yadu-nandana Krishna.

10 Supremely pleased,
Krishna, the lion-like Vṛṣṇi,
gifted precious gems to the baby.
Then, bestowing a name, *prabhu-*

11 Lord Janārdana-Krishna,
rooted-in-truth, O mahārāja,
said, regarding your father:
"Since Abhimanyu's baby
was born at a time
of the family's near-extinction,

12 Let him be named Parīkṣit,
'the Last of the Line.'
That is what Krishna said.
And so, ruler of men,
your father, the baby,
thrived in the palace,

13 Pleasing enormously, O Bharata,
the hearts of his people.
Your father was a month old,
O valiant Bharata,

14 When the bull-brave Vṛṣṇis,
learning the Pāṇḍavas were approaching
with their massive hoard of gems,
hurried out to welcome them.

15 The City of Elephants
was transformed by its inhabitants
into a flower-garlanded
and flag-fluttering festival.

16 O lord of men! *Janeśvara!*
All houses were decorated.
Eager to gratify the gods
with pūjā as ordained by tradition,

17 And to please the Pāṇḍavas,
Vidura supervised the worship.
The rājā-mārga main roads of the city
were overflowing with flowers.

18 Like the ebb and swell
of the distant waves of an ocean
rose the rhythm of the dancers
and the songs of actors.

19 And *vandi*-chanters and lovely girls,
O rājā,
transformed the capital
into a veritable Alakāpuri,
the city of Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera,
the god of wealth.

20 What a riot of colour
beautifying all parts of the city!
From one end of the capital
to the other extremity –

21 The south to the north,
a spectacle for the eyes!
The officials of the palace
announced a public festival,
and advised all the citizens
to celebrate the occasion
by wearing their most lavish dresses
and most expensive jewellery.

SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

1 Enemy-exterminating Vāsudeva-Krishna
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
when he heard of the arrival
of the Pāṇḍavas,
went out to welcome them,
accompanied by his ministers.

2 The entire retinue hurried
to receive the Pāṇḍavas
who, seeing the Vṛṣṇis,
happily greeted them,

3 And together, O rājā,
they entered the Elephant City.
The mahā-hubbub of welcome
and clatter of cavalry-chariots

4 Drowned earth and sky
and inter-space.
They entered their capital
with their enormous treasure,

5 The overjoyed Pāṇḍavas,
with their friends and followers.
Respecting the tradition,
they went to lord-of-men Dhṛtarāṣṭra,

6 And, touching his feet,
each announced his presence.
After honouring Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Subala's daughter Gāndhārī

7 And Kuntī received their respects,
O tiger-brave incomparable Bharata rājā!
Offering pūjā-respect to Vidura,
they met Yuyutsu, the Vaiśyā-maid's son.

8 O lord of the world!
The pūjā-respected Pāṇḍavas heroes –
they blazed with glory!
The mahā-wonderful story,
the truly incredible episode,
the enchanting episode

9 Of your father's birth they heard,
and they were thrilled,
O descendant of Bharata.
That amazing karma
of wise Vāsudeva-Krishna –
when they heard about it –

10 Inspired them to offer pūjā-worship
to Devakī-delighting Krishna,
deserving-of-pūjā Devakī's son Krishna.
After a few days,
Satyavatī-suta,
Satyavatī's son Vyāsa,

11 Of mahā-energetic prowess,
came to the Elephant City,
Nāga-nagara Hastināpura,
and received the pūjā-praise
as ordained by tradition
of those enhancers of Kaurava glory.

12 The Andhakas and the Vṛṣṇis –
all vied to serve and honour him
in every possible way.
They passed the time, exchanging *kathās*,

13 And Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
said to Vyāsa:
"*Bhagavan*! Revered one!
The treasure obtained by your grace –

14 It is my desire to offer it
in the Mahā-Krata Horse-Sacrifice.
O finest of all munis!
Give me your permission.
All of us depend on you
and mahātmā Krishna."

15 "You have my permission, O rājā,"
replied Vyāsa.
"Do what needs to be done.
Perform the Horse-Sacrifice
in the ordained manner
with lavish *dakṣiṇā*-gifts.

16 O Indra-among-rājās!
The Aśvamedha is a sacrifice
that purifies all misdeeds.
It will wash you clean, without fail."

17 Kuru-rājā dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
heard these words, O Kaurava king,
and initiated the Aśvamedha.

18 Armed with permission and instruction
from Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa,
skilled-in-speech king Yudhiṣṭhira
went to Vāsudeva-Krishna, and said:

19 "O finest of men! Puruṣa-sattama!
Mahābāho Acyuta!
O mahā-muscled undeteriorating one!
Because you are her son,
Devakī-devī is respected
as the paragon of mothers.
I ask you today
to help me fulfil my task.

20 O delighter of the Yādavas!
It is by your grace that we enjoy
the varied pleasures of this earth.
It is your power
and your glory and your wisdom
that rule the earth.

21 O Dāśārha descendant!
You are our supreme guru:
Accept the *dīkṣā*-initiation of this yajña.
If you perform the sacrifice,
all my misdeeds will be cleansed –
of this I have no doubt.

22 You are the Yajña!
You are the Akṣara!
You the Indestructible!
You the Mystic Syllable!
You are Dharma!
You are Prajāpati!
You are the supreme goal
the fulfilment of all!
This I do believe
with all my heart!"

23 "O mahā-muscled enemy-chastiser!"
said Vāsudeva-Krishna.
"Your words become you:
You have spoken well.
You are the supreme goal,
the fulfilment of all.
This I do believe
with all my heart.

24 Among all the Kaurava heroes,
you are the one
who shines with dharma-glory!
O rājā! You excel us!
You are our rājā.
You are our guru.

25 Therefore, O Bharata descendant,
I happily give you permission
to perform this yajña.
You will order us
to do whatever you decide
needs to be done.

26 O defectless one!
I promise you this, in all truth,
what you order I will do.
You are the *pārthiva* earth-lord.
Bhīmasena and Arjuna
and Mādrī's twin sons
will receive the benefits
of the yajña performed by you."

SECTION SEVENTY-TWO

1 Advised by Krishna (continued Vaiśampāyana),
percipient Dharma-putra Yudhiṣṭhira
paid his respects to Vyāsa,
and said:

2 "I depend on you for the success
of the Horse-Sacrifice.
Give me the *dīkṣā*-initiation
at the right time."

3 "Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira," assured Vyāsa,
"at the right time,
I, Paila and Yājñavalkya
will supervise the ritual.

4 The *dīkṣā* should be performed
during the full moon in Caitra.
O bull-brave Yudhiṣṭhira!
You should start making preparations.

5 Summon Sūta and Brahmin horse-experts,
and order them,
to select, after careful examination,
a sacrificial horse.

6 Set the animal free, O earth-lord,
to roam the earth,
the sea-and-sky-girt earth,
as ordained in the śāstras,
proclaiming the radiance of your fame
to the entire world."

7 Advised by Vyāsa (continued Vaiśampāyana),
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira said, "So be it,"
and implemented the recommendation
of the Brahma-vādin truth-speaker.

8 The materials required for the sacrifice,
O Indra-among-rājās,
were collected; then, O king,
Dharma's son,

9 Yudhiṣṭhira of illimitable ātman
apprised Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa;
and mahā-energetic Vyāsa
said to the royal son of Dharma:

10 "We are all ready to give you
the *dīkṣā*-initiation.
Order the golden *sphya*-sword readied,
and the *kūrca*-grass, O Kaurava.

11 All these articles for the sacrifice
must be made of gold.
And, as ordained in the śāstras,
set free the horse,
with the proper protection,
to roam the earth.

12 "O Brahmin!" Yudhiṣṭhira replied.
"The freeing of the horse
to wander the earth where it wills,
I leave to you.

13 Advise us, O muni,
who to appoint
the protectors of the horse
roaming the world at will."

14 O Indra-among-rājās!
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
Island-born Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa said:
"Of bowmen-the-finest, born after Bhīma,

15 Always victorious, confident,
full of fortitude –
let him be the horse-protector.
He annihilated the Nivātakavacas.
He has the śakti to conquer
the whole world.

16 He has the celestial weapons,
he has celestial armour,
a celestial bow and quiver,
He will follow the horse.

17 He is skilled in dharma and artha.
He is multi-learned.
By the ideals of the sāstras,
O finest of kings,
he is the perfect person
to protect the horse.

18 Rāja-putra, mahā-muscled,
dark-blue-*śyāma*-skinned,
lotus-petal-eyed,
Abhimanyu's father Arjuna,
the valiant hero, –
he will be the horse's protector.

19 O lord of the world!
Kaunteya-Bhīmasena also
is brilliantly brave and energetic.
With Nakula's help,
he is the ideal person
to look after the kingdom.

20 As for Sahadeva, O Kaurava,
his intelligence and mahā-renown
make him the ideal person
to look after family matters."

21 The enhancer of Kaurava splendour,
abiding by Vyāsa's advice,
appointed Phālguna-Arjuna
as the protector of the horse.

22 "Come, Arjuna, O valiant hero,"
said Yudhiṣṭhira.
"You are the only one
to protect the horse.

23 O mahā-muscled one!
O defectless one!
Avoid as best as you can to clash
with challenging earth-lords.

24 Invite them to take part
in my Horse-Sacrifice.
O mahā-muscled one!
Be friendly with them."

25 Saying this to Savyasācī-Arjuna
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira
ordered Bhīma and Nakula
to see to the protection
of Hastināpura.

26 With earth-ruler Dhṛtarāṣṭra permission
Yudhiṣṭhira next
ordered finest-of-warriors Sahadeva
to attend to family matters.

SECTION SEVENTY-THREE

1 At the auspicious *dīkṣā*-hour
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
the *ṛtvik*-priests initiated the earth-lord
into the Aśvamedha.

2 He completed the Paśu-bandha ritual
of tying the horse.
Pāṇḍu's son Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
in the company
of the officiating priests,
blazed with mahā-glory.

3 As ordained in the śāstras,
the horse selected
for the Horse-Sacrifice
was set free
by truth-speaking Brahma-vādin
mahā-energetic Vyāsa.

4 After the *dīkṣā*, O rājā,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
with a gold-garland round his neck,
blazed like Pāvaka the fire-god.

5 His upper garment a black deerskin,
holding a staff,
his dress of red silk,
wise-in-dharma Yudhiṣṭhira
radiated splendour on the altar
like a veritable Prajāpati.

6 O lord of the world! *Viśāmpate*!
The *ṛtviks* were dressed like him.
And Arjuna also blazed
with the effulgence of the fire-god.

7 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, in a chariot
pulled by white horses,
prepared, O protector of the earth,
to follow
the black-deer-skinned horse,
as instructed by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

8 O protector of the earth!
O rājā!
Twanging his Gāṇḍīva bow,
wearing iguana-skin finger-protectors,
Arjuna confidently prepared
to follow the horse.

9 O rājā! O radiant lord!
All Hastināpura,
elders and children and others,
flocked out to see
finest-of-the-Kauravas Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
leave Hastināpura.

10 Such a multitude gathered
to see the horse and the man!
Everyone pushing and shoving,
and suffocating and perspiring!

11 What a cacophony of acclamation
for Kuntī's son Arjuna!
It drowned all the directions,
O mahārāja!

12 *There he goes, the son of Kuntī,*
behind the radiant horse –
mahā-muscled Arjuna
with his incomparable bow!

13 Large-minded Jiṣṇu-Arjuna heard
the words of the crowd,
and he received their blessings:
"*Svasti te'astu*!
May good fortune go with you!
Safe be your return!"

14 O Indra-among-men!
Others complained:
"But we can't see him –
only his bow . . .

15 The wonderful Gāṇḍīva bow,
the fearful-twanging bow!
May good fortune go with you!
Fear-free be your path!

16 We will see him when he returns.
For return he will!"
O bull-brave Bharata!
The men and the women –

17 Such sweet sentiments did they express
again and again.
A disciple of Yājñavalkya,
an expert in yajña-rituals,

18 And an authority on the Vedas,
approached Pārtha-Arjuna
to perform the *śānti* ritual.
O lord of the earth!
A host of other Brahmins,
all learned-in-the-Vedas,

19 And many Kṣatriyas also,
O lord of the world,
instructed by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
approached mahātmā Arjuna
to perform the ordained rites,
O protector of the earth.

20 Mahārāja! O finest of men!
The horse wandered freely
through all the territories
subjugated by the powerful Pāṇḍavas.

21 Many vivid and wonderful wars were fought,
O valiant one,
by Pāṇḍava Arjuna in those territories.
I will describe them.

22 O ruler of the earth!
The horse did a *pradakṣiṇa*
of the whole world, O rājā,
from the north to the east.

23 The splendid horse subjugated
many kingdoms of many earth-lords,
faithfully trailed by the mahā-chariot-hero
Śvetavāhana white-horsed Arjuna.

24 There were any number of them,
O mahārāja,
all the rājās who had sided
with Arjuna on Kurukṣetra
and were now bereft
of friends and relatives.

25 Many bow-and-sword-wielding Kirātas,
O rājā,
and Yavana and Mleccha survivors
of Kurukṣetra,
now faced Arjuna again.
for fresh battle.

26 Among them were ārya earth-lords,
copiously armed
with warriors and war-vehicles,
difficult to defeat
on the field of battle,
facing Pāṇḍu's son again.

27 O lord of the earth!
Varied and vivid clashes
took place between those earth-rulers
and Arjuna.

28 O defectless rājā!
Let me describe for you
some of the special encounters
that took place then.

SECTION SEVENTY-FOUR

1 A fierce battle erupted
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
between diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna
and the sons and grandsons
of the Trigartas who were renowned
mahā-chariot-heroes.

2 As soon as news reached them
that the splendid horse
selected for the Horse-Sacrifice
had entered their kingdom,
they put on coats of mail
and encircled Arjuna.

3 They surrounded the horse, O rājā,
with magnificient chariots,
with quivers strapped on their backs,
bent on capturing the animal.

4 Aware of their strategy,
foe-exterminating Arjuna
tried to gently reason those heroes
into abandoning their attempt.

5 Spurning his advice,
they rained arrows on him.
Kirīṭin-Arjuna repulsed the attack
of the rajas-and-tamas-afflicted heroes.

6 O Bharata descendant!
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna smiled and said:
"O flaunters of adharma! Stop fighting!
Life is a precious gift.

7 At the time of his departure,
heroic Pārtha-Arjuna
was advised by dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
to spare the lives
of all the earth-lords whose relatives
had perished on Kurukṣetra.

8 Arjuna respected the instruction
of wise dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
and warned the Trigartas,
but they did not listen.

9 Deluging the Trigartas with arrows,
Arjuna attacked
the Trigarta rājā Sūryavarman,
laughing as he did so.

10 Unperturbed, the Trigarta warriors
drowned the directions
with the clatter of their chariots
challenging Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

11 With amazing dexterity,
O Indra-among-rājās,
Sūryavarman shot hundreds of arrows
on Pārtha-Arjuna.

12 And other mahā-bowmen also,
reinforcing him,
shot volleys of additional arrows
to kill Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

13 But before those arrow-clouds
descended on him,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna, O raja, intercepted
and destroyed them with his arrows.

14 Sūryavarman's younger brother,
the energetic boy Ketuvarman
resolved to save his brother
from illustrious Pāṇḍava-Arjuna.

15 As Ketuvarman advanced towards him,
dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
the exterminator of inimical heroes,
slaughtered him with a volley of arrows.

16 Ketuvarman was killed,
and the mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛtavarman
sped his chariot towards Arjuna,
showering him with arrows.

17 Impressed and delighted
with the boy's dexterity and courage
was Guḍākeśa-Arjuna,
himself a mahā-energetic warrior.

18 Pākśāsani-Arjuna,
son of Pāka-chastising Indra,
saw only the arrows
as they whizzed towards him,
but not when they were strung
and not when they were shot.

19 Briefly he offered his pūjā-praise
to Dhṛtavarman,
admiring the skill and heroism
of the young man.

20 Dhṛtavarman was as fiercely angry
as a Pannaga-serpent,
but the Kaurava hero
mahā-muscled Arjuna
was kind and gentle with him,
and spared his life.

21 Pārtha-Arjuna was condescending,
despite his limitless energy,
but that did not prevent Dhṛtavarman
from shooting a flaming shaft at him.

22 Vijaya-Arjuna was momentarily stunned
by the impact of that shaft:
his Gāṇḍīva bow slipped
out of his injured hand.

23 *Vibho*! O radiant lord!
O Bharata descendant!
As that bow fell
from Savyasācī-Arjuna's grip,
it looked like the bow
of Śakra-Indra himself.

24 That celestial mahā-bow slipped
and fell, O earth-lord,
and Dhṛtavarman laughed out loud
in that mahā-clash.

25 Livid with rage,
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna wiped his bleeding hand,
retrieved his bow,
and shot a deluge of arrows.

26 There was a *hala-hala* commotion
in the sky and in heaven,
as the creatures of the universe
praised the amazing feat.

27 The Trigarta warriors saw Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
livid with rage,
like Kāla, like Antaka, like Yama,
and they surrounded him.

28 They concerted their offensive
to rescue Dhṛtavarman.
This further infuriated
Guḍākeśa-Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

29 With arrows of superfine steel
which resembled the arrows
used by Mahendra-Indra himself,
Arjuna killed eighteen of them.

30 The Trigarta warriors fled.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna pursued them
with fatal snake-venomed arrows –
and laughed out loud.

31 O rājā! Demoralised by the arrows
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
the Trigarta mahā-chariot-heroes
scattered in utter panic.

32 Some of them implored that lion-brave
Saṁśaptaka-subjugator:
"We are your servants!
Always at your service!

33 Order us at any time,
O Pārtha-Arjuna!
O delighter of the Kauravas!
We are here to please you."

34 Arjuna listened to their pleas,
and said, "Kings!
If you wish to stay alive,
acknowledge my lordship."

SECTION SEVENTY-FIVE

1 That splendid horse (continued Vaiśampāyana)
next entered Prāgjyotiṣa,
and was challenged by Bhagadatta's son,
brilliant-in-battle Vajradatta.

2 O descendant of Bharata!
No sooner had the horse
entered his kingdom that it faced
the earth-lord Vajradatta.

3 Rushing out of his capital,
king Vajradatta
seized the horse, intending to take it
back to his city.

4 The bull-brave mahā-muscled Kaurava
saw through this tactic,
twanged his Gāṇḍīva,
and swooped on his enemy.

5 Harassed by the Gāṇḍīva's arrows;
valiant king Vajradatta
was forced to free the horse,
to escape from Pārtha-Arjuna.

6 Retreating to his capital,
that brilliant-in-battle king.
clad himself in armour,
and then that excellent monarch,
atop a war-elephant,
marched out to fight afresh.

7 A white umbrella shaded the head,
and white yak-tail whisks
fanned the mahā-chariot-hero
as he marched to battle.

8 It was foolish of him,
it was childish of him
to face the Pāṇḍava
mahā-chariot-hero,
Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
the doer of dreadful deeds.

9 Wrathfully he drove his elephant
towards Śvetāśva-Arjuna
the white-horsed warrior –
a hill-huge elephant
from his temples trickled
passionate rutting juice.

10 An irresistible elephant!
A mahā-cloud of an elephant!
An enemy-elephant-annihilator!
A magnificent *śāstra*-trained beast!

11 Pierced by the iron goad,
that mahā-powerful animal
sped through the ranks
as if flying through the sky.

12 O Bharata rājā, seeing the elephant
rushing headlong towards him,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna stood his ground
and faced the earth-lord.

13 Infuriated Vajradatta
covered Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
with flaming *tomara*-missiles
resembling a swarm of locusts.

14 With his Gāṇḍīva counter-arrows
Arjuna sliced those *tomaras*
in fragments of two and three
as they sped through the sky.

15 Seeing his *tomara*-missiles disintegrated,
Bhagadatta's son
deluged Pāṇḍava-Arjuna with more arrows
shot with unfailing precision.

16 This provoked Arjuna into replying
with a swifter shower
of gold-feathered shafts
targeting Bhagadatta's son.

17 Mahā-energetic Vajradatta,
struck by those arrows
in that mahā-encounter, fell,
but did not lose consciousness.

18 Re-mounting his magnificent elephant,
Bhagadatta's victory-seeking son
calmly blanketed Vijaya-Arjuna
with a fresh volley of arrows.

19 Jisnu-Arjuna angrily retaliated,
deluging the elephant
with arrows that flamed like fire
and stung like venomous snakes.

20 The lacerated mahā-elephant,
blood-dripping and blood-drenched,
looked like a tall hill streaming
with crimson clay in the monsoon.

SECTION SEVENTY-SIX

1 O bull-brave Bharata!
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
They fought for full three days –
Arjuna and that Indra-among-men –
like Śatakratu-Indra
clashing in the past with Vṛtra.

2 On the fourth day,
mahā-powerful Vajradatta
guffawed and said
to Arjuna:

3 "Arjuna! Arjuna! Wait!
You cannot escape!
Kill you I will,
and by doing so
I will pay back my father
the *toya*-debt I owe him.

4 He was an old man, my father,
he was a friend of your father,
and you killed a man
too old to save himself.
Come, fight me!
I am young enough."

5 O Kaurava descendant!
Saying this, lord-of-men Vajradatta,
livid with rage, goaded
his elephant towards the Pāṇḍava.

6 He seemed to cleave the sky,
that Indra-among-elephants,
goaded by percipient Vajradatta
against Pāṇḍava Arjuna.

7 From the trunk of that rājā-of-elephants
gushed a water-shower
splashing Guḍākeśa-Arjuna all over,
like blue clouds a hill.

8 Indeed, goaded by the rājā,
trumpeting and thundering like a cloud,
the elephant plunged headlong
at Phālguna-Arjuna.

9 That Indra-among-elephants
seemed to dance as it advanced,
goaded by Vajradatta, O rājā,
against the Kaurava mahā-chariot-hero.

10 In no way disconcerted,
enemy-annihilating Arjuna
readied his Gāṇḍīva
against the charging elephant.

11 O Bharata descendant!
Pāṇḍava Arjuna
was infuriated with the earth-lord
who obstructed his mission,
and with whose family
he had a long-standing feud.

12 Pāṇḍava Arjuna blocked the charge
of the elephant
with a barrage of arrows –
like land containing ocean billows.

13 Its body bristling with arrows
like a porcupine's quills,
that magnificent *śrīmān*-elephant
was effectively halted.

14 Bhagadatta's son, king Vajradatta,
his offensive frustrated,
in a fury of rage let loose
a shower of sharp arrows.

15 Mahā-muscled Arjuna neutralised
all those foe-exterminating arrows,
reversing their direction.
An astounding feat!

16 Again the rage-filled rājā of Prāgjyotiṣa
goaded his Indra-among-elephants,
his hill-huge war beast,
against Arjuna.

17 Pākśāsani-Arjuna
saw the onrushing elephant
and targeted it
with a flaming *nārāca*-shaft.

18 Struck by that shaft, O rājā,
the elephant toppled
and fell like a mountain peak
shattered by lightning.

19 Pierced by Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's arrow,
sprawled on the field,
the elephant looked like a hill
disintegrated by a thunderbolt.

20 With the fall of his elephant
fell Vajradatta also.
Pāṇḍava Arjuna said to the supine king,
"Do not fear.

21 Mahā-energetic Yudhiṣṭhira
advised me when I left:
'Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Do not kill any rājā.

22 O tiger-brave hero!
Enough if you disarm them.
Kill none of their soldiers either,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

23 Invite all the rājās instead,
with their families and friends,
to the Aśvamedha sacrifice
of Yudhiṣṭhira.'

24 I will obey my brother,
O lord of men!
I will not kill you.
Rise! Do not fear!
Return safe to your city, O earth-lord!
Svastimān gaccha!

25 Mahārāja! On the full moon day
of the month of Caitra,
be present at the Aśvamedha sacrifice
of wise Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira."

26 To the suggestion of Pāṇḍava Arjuna,
rājā Vajradatta,
the defeated son of Bhagadatta, said:
"*Tatheti*: So be it."

SECTION SEVENTY-SEVEN

1 O Bharata! (continued Vaiśampāyana)
After defeating rājā Bhagadatta,
and succeeding in gaining his goodwill,
Arjuna entered the Saindhava kingdom,

2 Where a fierce battle took place
between Kirīṭin-Arjuna
and all the Saindhavas, mahārāja,
who had survived the war.

3 Refusing to accept the victory
of the bull-brave Pāṇḍava,
white-horsed Śvetavāhana-Arjuna,
they angrily challenged him.

4 Unimpressed by Pārtha-Arjuna,
Bhīmasena's younger brother,
those venomous Kṣatriyas seized the horse
the instant it entered their kingdom.

5 And dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna
who was behind the horse
protecting it with his bow –
they launched an attack on him.

6 Though humbled by Arjuna earlier,
these mahā-valiant rājās,
drive by hope of victory,
encircled tiger-brave Arjuna.

7 Shouting their names and *gotras*,
proclaiming their feats,
they deluged Pārtha-Arjuna
with volleys of arrows.

8 Determined to win the battle
they showered Kaunteya-Arjuna
with arrows designed to halt
an elephant offensive.

9 Ensconced in their chariots,
they surrounded Arjuna,
the dark-and-dreadful-deed-doer
who was fighting on foot.

10 They attacked that hero from all sides –
that Nivātakavaca-annihilator,
that exterminator of the Saṃśaptakas,
that destroyer of the Saindhavas.

11 They caged Bībhatsu-Arjuna, as it were,
with a thousand chariots
and ten thousand cavalry,
and silently exulted.

12 O Kaurava! These valiant warriors
had not forgotten
the slaughter by Savyasācī-Arjuna
of the Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha.

13 They drenched Pārthā-Arjuna with a rain
of Parjanya-cloud arrows.
The downpour shrouded him
like clouds obscuring the sun.

14 O Bharata descendant!
Screened by those arrows,
the bull-brave Pāṇḍava
looked like a caged bird.

15 Seeing Kaunteya-Arjuna
trapped in those arrows,
the three worlds broke
into wails of "Hai! Hai!"
and the sun seemed to lose
its celestial radiance.

16 Then suddenly, mahārāja,
a violent wind started blowing,
and Rāhu swallowed, in one gulp,
the sun and the moon.

17 Countless meteors struck the sun
from all sides, O rājā.
Kailāsa the mahā-mountain
began to shake.

18 The seven ṛṣis and the deva-ṛṣis,
overcome with fear,
stricken with pain and grief,
breathed long and heavy sighs.

19 The meteors crashed also
inside the moon-maṇḍala.
Weird spumes of smoke
smothered the ten directions.

20 Crimson clouds, flecked with lightning,
rained blood and marrow
without warning, giving brief glimpses
of a wide-arched rainbow.

21 These were the wonders witnessed
when Phālguna-Arjuna,
the finest of the Bharatas,
was attacked by his enemies.

22 That thick network of arrows
so confused Arjuna
that his Gāṇḍīva slipped from the grip
of his leather finger-protectors

23 Taking advantage of the confusion,
of the mahā-chariot-hero,
the Saindhavas harassed him further
with another mahā-volley.

24 Realising the predicament of Pārtha-Arjuna,
the anxiety-stricken gods
broke into auspicious *śānti*-chants
to ensure his welfare.

25 The deva-ṛṣis and the seven ṛṣis
and the Brahma-ṛṣis
intoned *japas* for the victory
of wise Pārtha-Arjuna.

26 O earth-lord! That was how life-energy returned
to wise, hill-firm Arjuna,
the wielder of celestial weapons –
by the intervention of the gods.

27 The delighter of the Kauravas
pulled taut his celestial bow,
and the thunderous twang reverberated
as if produced by a giant *yantra.*

28 *Prabhu*-lord Pārtha-Arjuna,
shooting arrow-showers,
looked like Puraṁdara-Indra
drenching the world with rain.

29 The Saindhava warriors and their rājā,
swamped by those arrows,
disappeared from sight –
like locust-covered trees.

30 The noise of the Gāṇḍīva
struck terror in their hearts.
Moaning and groaning, sighing and crying,
they fled in panic.

[XIV:77:31-33; 78:1-4]

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31 Tiger-among-men Arjuna
swept through them
like a fiery *alāta-cakra* wheel,
shooting arrows all the while.

32 Like the wielder-of-the-thunderbolt
Vajra-bhṛt Mahendra-Indra,
the exterminator of enemies
Amitrahā-Arjuna
shot arrows in all directions
like an Indra-jāla magic show.

33 That finest of the Kauravas
routed his enemies,
with the radiance of the sun
at the height of autumn
scattering *megha-jāla* cloud-clusters
with its piercing rays.

SECTION SEVENTY-EIGHT

1 There he stood (continued Vaiśampāyana),
the undefeatable Gāṇḍīva-wielder,
indomitable on the field,
like a Himālayan mountain.

2 The Saindhava warriors regrouped,
O Bharata descendant,
and once again drowned him
in an arrowy downpour.

3 To his enemies, freshly regrouped
but facing annihilation,
the laughing mahā-muscled son of Kuntī
said gently:
"Fight with all your śakti!
Defeat me if you can!

4 You will have to try very hard.
Mahā-peril faces you!
I'll fight all of you!
I'll ruin your arrow-volleys!

5 You want to fight, do you?
Wait! I'll teach you a lesson."
The Kaurava wielder of the Gāṇḍīva
in a burst of anger said this,

6 O Bharata, and then he remembered
his eldest brother's words:
'*Tāta*! Dear one! Do not kill
these victory-seeking Kṣatriyas.

7 But defeat them you must!'
Bull-brave Phālguna-Arjuna
recalled the advice of mahātmā
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and thought:

8 *That Indra-among-men advised me,*
'Do not kill the kings.'
I cannot flout the auspicious words
of my dharmarāja brother.

9 *The rājās are not to be killed.*
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira's words
must be respected. But how?
Puzzled, bull-brave Phālguna-Arjuna,

10 Wise in dharma, announced
to the battle-brilliant Saindhavas:
"I say this for your good!
I do not want to harm you.

11 Anyone who tells me, 'I am yours,
you have defeated me,'
I will spare him.
If this appeals to you,
if you want your welfare,
then do what should be done.

12 If you do otherwise,
you will doom yourselves."
The bull-brave Kaurava,
after warning the warriors,
resumed his attack
on the Saindhavas.

13 Arjuna was livid with fury.
So were his victory-seeking foes.
Hundreds and thousands
of curved arrows,

14 O rājā, were fired by the Saindhavas
on the Gāṇḍīva-wielder.
Seeing those snake-venomed shafts
speeding towards him,

15 With his own volley of sharp arrows
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna shredded them.
After slicing those colourful
kaṅka-feathered arrows,

16 Arjuna wounded the Saindhavas,
one by one, with sharp arrows.
With *prāsa*-darts and śakti-spears
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna was again

17 Targeted by the Saindhava kings
who recalled the slaughter of Jayadratha,
but mahā-powerful Kirīṭin-Arjuna
frustrated their offensive,

18 Intercepting and disintegrating
all their weapons in midflight.
Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna,
in a fury of rage,
targeted all those warriors
yearning for victory

19 And decapitated them with volleys
of *bhalla* and sharp arrows.
Some of the enemy fled,
others rallied to attack afresh,

20 Still others remained stock-still –
but all shouted horrendously,
like a billow-swollen ocean.
They were eliminated
by the illimitably energetic
son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,

21 But what a flight each put up –
such confidence, such valour!
With his knotted arrows,
Phālguna-Arjuna stupefied his enemies.

22 Their vehicles and other equipment
were in utter ruin.
Realising their terrible predicament,
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's daughter,

23 With her brave grandson –
the son of Jayadratha's son Suratha –
Duḥśalā approached,
in a chariot,

24 Pāṇḍava Arjuna on the battlefield,
hoping peace would prevail.
She faced Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
weeping uncontrollably.

25 *Prabhu*-lord Dhanañjaya-Arjuna saw her,
and laid aside his bow.
Bow-less, Pārtha-Arjuna embraced his sister
as ordained by tradition,

26 And asked, "What can I do for you?"
to which she replied:
"O finest of the Bharatas!
Look at this boy.
He is the son
of your sister's son.

27 O bull-brave Pārtha-Arjuna!
Receive his reverence!"
Arjuna asked her:
"Where is his father?"

28 To which, O rājā, Duḥśalā replied:
"Stricken with sorrow
by the death of his father,
this boy's father –

29 Valiant Suratha –
the way he perished –
I will tell you.
O defectless one!
My son Suratha knew you had killed
his father Jayadratha.

30 When he was told you were here
as protector of the horse,
so anguished was he with grief
of the loss of his father,
O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, he gave up
his *prāṇa* life-breath.

31 O defectless one!
The instant he was told
'He is here,
Bībhatsu the dreadful-deed-doer' –
the mere mention of that name
was such agony
that my son fainted and fell
and died.

32 *Prabhu*-lord! I saw him
sprawled dead on the ground.
I come here with his little son,
seeking your protection."

33 Dhṛtarāṣṭra's daughter said this
and began sobbing.
Pārtha Arjuna stood as if forlorn,
staring at the ground.
Duḥśalā looked at him,
and said:

34 "You are wise in dharma.
You are an enhancer of Kaurava glory.
Have pity on this poor boy!
Look at your suffering sister!

35 Forget wicked Jayadratha
and the Kuru-rājā Duryodhana!
To Abhimanyu is born Parīkṣit,
the destroyer of heroic foes.

36 To Suratha is born this child,
my mahā-armed grandson.
O tiger-among-men!
I bring him here with me

37 To restore peace among the warriors.
Listen to what I have to say.
Wicked Jaydratha's son has come to you,
O mahā-muscled one.

38 Have pity for the poor child,
he is so young.
O foe-chastiser!
He begs you with bowed head.

39 O mahā-muscled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Make peace for his sake!
Poor child, he knows nothing,
O Pārtha-Arjuna,
nothing about which relatives
of his have perished.

40 O you who are wise in dharma!
Show some mercy!
Cast off your anger.
Free your mind from thoughts
of his violent unāryan *pitāmaha*,
his grandfather Jayadratha,

41 Who wronged you so deeply.
Have mercy on this boy."
Duḥśalā's compassion-compelling grief
made Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

42 Think of Gāndhārī devī
and the earth-lord;
in an agony of despairing grief
he railed against Kṣatriya-dharma:

43 "Shame on that which has made me
despatch all my relatives
to the realm of Yama!"
He said this,
and he tried to console his sister
with deep concern.

44 Lovingly he embraced her;
he persuaded her
to return to the palace.

45 Duḥśalā persuaded her warriors
to give up the mahā-battle;
then the lovely-faced lady
Śubhānanā
pūjā-respected Pārtha-Arjuna
and returned to her palace.

46 After defeating the valiant Saindhavas,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
continued to follow the horse
which wandered at will.

47 The valiant warrior Arjuna
trailed the horse
like Pināka-dhṛk deva Śiva
the trident-wielding deity
pursuing the deer in the sky
in the distant past.

48 The horse roamed at will
through many kingdoms,
providing any number of occasions
for Pārtha-Arjuna's war-skills.

49 O bull-brave Janamejaya!
Trailed by the Pāṇḍava,
the horse unchallenged reached
the territory of Maṇipura.

SECTION SEVENTY-NINE

1 When he heard that his father Arjuna
had entered his kingdom,
king Babhruvāhana, accompanied by Brahmins,
with a hoard of wealth,
prepared to receive him
with complete humility.

2 Wise Dhanañjaya-Arjuna had Kṣatriya-dharma
uppermost in his mind
and did not approve of this tactic
of the ruler of Maṇipura.

3 Dharmātmā Phālguna-Arjuna warned:
"This is not right.
What you are doing violates
the principles of Kṣatriya-dharma.

4 I am here as the protector
of Yudhiṣṭhira's horse.
I have intruded in your kingdom.
Who are you not fighting me, my son?

5 *Dhik*! Shame on you,
you utterly foolish boy!
You make a mockery
of Kṣatriya-dharma!
I am here to fight you –
and you receive me with open arms!

6 What life are you living
if you can show no manliness?
Have you become a woman,
welcoming an adversary so elegantly?

7 You utter idiot! You scoundrel!
You are behaving
as if I have come to you
unarmed, in friendship!"

8 The daughter of the Pannaga-chief,
Ulūpī heard her husband say this
and, unable to tolerate the insult,
she emerged from the earth, and faced him.

9 *Prabhu*-lord! She saw her son
staring vacantly at the ground,
head bent, humiliated,
berated by his fight-favouring father.

10 The daughter of the Uraga-chief,
the lovely-limbed lady,
Cāru-sarvāṅgi-Ulūpī
approached dharma-dedicated Babhruvāhana
and said to him
these words fraught with dharma:

11 "I am your mother Ulūpī,
daughter of the Pannaga-chief.
Do as I say, my son,
and gain supreme dharma.

12 This finest of the Kauravas,
this unbeatable-in-battle hero –
this father of yours – fight him!
Fight him – and make him happy! Yes!"

13 O bull-brave Bharata!
Encouraged by his mother,
mahā-energetic rājā Babhruvāhana
decided to challenge his father.

14 Encasing himself in gold armour,
sporting dazzling head-gear,
armed with hundreds of quivers,
he mounted his chariot –

15 A chariot pulled by wind-swift horses,
equipped with every war-weapon,
including *cakras* and *upaskaras*,
a gold-filigreed glorious vehicle.

16 Flying high his war-flag
symbolled with a golden lion,
rājā Babhruvāhana drove out
to confront Pārtha-Arjuna.

17 No sooner did that heroic prince
see the sacrificial horse
protected by Pārtha-Arjuna
than he ordered
its immediate capture
by equestrian experts.

18 Ecstatic-ātmaned was Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
when the horse was captured.
On foot he faced the offensive
of his chariot-riding son.

19 Rājā Babhruvāhana
attacked his heroic father
with a deluge of extremely sharp
snake-venomous arrows.

20 Unparalleled that confrontation
of father and son!
Like the clash in the past
between gods and antigods!
Both delightedly determined
to destroy each other!

21 Laughing as he did so,
Babhruvāhana grazed the neck
of tiger-among-men Kirīṭin-Arjuna
with a sleek shaft.

22 That feathered arrow
slid through Kaunteya-Arjuna's body
like a snake through an ant-hill,
and plunged inside the earth.

23 In extreme pain,
leaning on his brilliant bow,
intelligent Arjuna
sought to restore himself
from his death-like state
by drawing on his divine energy.

24 Mahā-radiant and bull-brave Arjuna,
Śakra-Indra's son,
regained consciousness fully,
and praised his son:

25 "*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Well done! Well done!
O son of Citrāṅgadā!
O my mahā-muscled son!
Your valour delights me!

26 I'll shower you with arrows!
Face me! Fight me, my son!"
Saying this, the annihilator of enemies
shot a volley of *nārāca*-shafts.

27 With a counter-volley of *bhallas*
rājā Babhruvāhana
sliced all the *nārāca*-arrows
released from the Gāṇḍīva –
splintering in twos and threes
those arrows as fierce as thunderbolts.

28 With a barrage of brilliant shafts
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son shredded
the gold-filigreed, palm-symbolled flag
on Babhruvāhana's chariot.

29 O chastiser of enemies! O rājā!
Pāṇḍu's son laughed
and slaughtered the mahā-bodied
and mahā-swift chariot-steeds.

30 In a paroxysm of rage,
rājā Babhruvāhana
leapt out of his chariot
to fight his Pāṇḍava father.

31 Pṛthā-Kuntī's bull-brave son,
thunderbolt-wielding Indra's son,
delighted with his son's performance,
attacked him afresh.

32 Muscular Babhruvāhana persuaded himself
that his father was faltering,
and drenched him with a volley
of fatally poisoned arrows.

33 With a finely whetted arrow
fitted with fancy feathers,
with childish bravado
Babhruvāhana pierced his father's chest.

34 That dreadful arrow, O rājā,
penetrated the Pāṇḍava's chest,
wounding him seriously. Injured by his son,
the joy-of-the-Kauravas

35 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, O rājā,
fell on the field.
The collapse of the Kaurava hero,
of unbeatable-in-battle fame,

36 Made Citrāṅgadā's son Babhruvāhana
stupefied into insensibility.
The fierce-fighting rājā Babhruvāhana,
seeing his father fall,

37 Himself fell because already weakened
by Arjuna's arrow-showers.
He slumped on the battlefield,
as if embracing the earth.

38 Learning about her husband's death
and son's loss of consciousness,
Citrāṅgadā hurried to the battle-site
in a state of despair.

39 When the mother of Maṇipura's lord
saw her husband's corpse,
her sorrow-stricken heart shuddered,
she lamented inconsolably.

SECTION EIGHTY

1 The grieving lotus-petal-eyed lady
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
was so profoundly depressed
that she fainted and fell.

2 Recovering gradually her senses,
she said to Ulūpī-devī,
the divinely endowed daughter
of the Pannaga snake-chief:

3 "See, Ulūpī, inspired by you,
my son Babhruvāhana
has slain on the battlefield
our always-victorious husband.

4 You are a husband-devoted wife,
an ārya-dharma-knowing *pativratā*.
And see what you have done –
killed your husband on the battlefield!

5 If Dhanañjaya-Arjuna has harmed you
in any way whatsoever,
forgive him. I beg of you:
revive Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

6 You are wise in the ways of dharma.
O gracious āryan lady!
You are renowned in the three worlds.
How is it that you
inspire your son to kill your husband
and are untouched by grief?

7 O daughter of the snake-chief!
O Pannaga-nandinī!
I do not mourn my dead son.
I mourn my dead husband
who was welcomed here
with such fatal hospitality."

8 Saying this to Ulūpī-devī,
the Pannaga-chief's illustrious daughter
approached her husband's corpse,
and said:

9 "O finest of the Kauravas!
You whom they love so deeply!
O my mahā-muscled beloved!
Rise! I free your horse!

10 *Vibho*! O radiant one!
You are the protector
of Dharmarāja 's sacrificial horse.
Why are you lying on the ground?

11 O Kaurava-delighter! Kuru-nandana!
You are my *prāṇa* life-breath
and the *prāṇa* of all the Kauravas.
How can the giver
of *prāṇa* life-breath to others
give up his own *prāṇa*?

12 Look at your handsome husband, Ulūpī!
You are the one
who urged your son to kill him –
and you have no regrets!

13 Let this boy, my young son,
lie here lifeless for ever –
but pink-eyed Lohitākṣa-Arjuna,
Guḍ ākeśa-Arjuna,
victory-winning Vijaya-Arjuna –
restore him to life!

14 O supremely fortune-favoured one!
There is nothing wrong
with a man having many wives.
Objectionable is a woman
who has many husbands.
You should not think otherwise.

15 The Divine Creator Dhātā himself
blessed this eternal bond
of loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friendship –
an unbreakable togetherness.
It is up to you to prove the truth
of this *sakhya*-bond.

16 You have killed your husband
with the help of your son.
If you do not bring him back to life,
I will take my own life.

17 Devī, grief is destroying me.
I am husband-less and son-less.
I will take the *prāya*-vow and die –
I promise you this."

18 Saying this to the daughter
of the Pannaga-chief,
the daughter who was with her,
the co-wife of Arjuna,
Caitravāhana-Citrāṅgadā, silently,
O lord of men,
sat down in the *prāya*-posture
of self-willed death.

19 She stopped lamenting (said Vaiśampāyana)
the grief-stricken lady;
she rested her husband's feet
in her lap;
hoping for her son to be revived,
she sighed deeply.

20 Rājā Babhruvāhana regained consciousness.
He saw his mother
seated in that posture on the battlefield,
and he said to her:

21 "Oh, can anything be more pitiful!
My beloved mother,
a lady used to every comfort,
sitting on the ground,
mourning the passing away
of her heroic husband!

22 The finest of weapons-wielders,
the exterminator of enemies –
killed by me! – a ghastly deed
that I have done!

23 Aho! How hard-hearted she must be,
this desolated devī
whose heart does not break
even after she sees
her mahā-muscled powerful husband
sprawled dead on the field.

24 You die when you die,
never before your time –
which must be the reason
my mother and I are still alive.

25 Hai! Hai! Sliced on the ground
is the golden armour
of the foremost hero
of the Kaurava race,
killed by his self-willed son!
Dhik! Shame on me!

26 Bho! Bho! Look, oh you Brahmins!
Look at my heroic father,
killed by his son, his heroic fame
straddling the earth.

27 Precious little have they helped
this superlative Kaurava –
these Brahmins commissioned by Yudhiṣṭhira
to assure *śānti* to the horse.

28 Violent and cruel and criminal
is the deed I have done.
Punish me, O *vipra* Brahmins,
I have slain my own father!

29 I have killed my own father!
I deserve to suffer!
I am cruel and violent.
Draped with my father's skin,
I will expiate my crime
with a twelve-year exile.

30 Give me my father's skull,
give me my father's head to carry.
There is no other expiation
for a scoundrel who murders his father.

31 Look, I have killed your husband,
O daughter of a peerless Nāga!
I have killed Arjuna today,
I have done something to please you.

32 But I cannot bear the burden,
O gracious lady! *Śubhe*!
I will take the path today
which my father has taken.

33 Mother! Devī! Be happy, be happy!
I dead today –
and the Gāṇḍīva-wielder dead!
I give you my word."

34 Desolated with grief, mahārāja,
rājā Babhruvāhana
touched water in ritual purification,
and exclaimed:

35 "Mother! Listen to me!
I speak the truth,
O daughter of the finest Bhujaga!
O creatures of the world –
all moving and unmoving beings –
listen to me!

36 If my father, finest of men
Narasattama Jaya-Arjuna,
does not regain life
and stand up in front of me,
I will shrivel myself to death
on the battlefield.

37 What redemption is there for me
who have killed his own father?
I have slain a guru-elder,
I am doomed to hell.

38 The guilt of killing a brave Kṣatriya
can be cleansed
by a gift of a hundred cows.
But killing one's father
is a crime so heinous,
impossible to redeem.

39 Unique he was, mahā-radiant,
Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
my dharmātmā father. I have killed him,
I have doomed myself."

40 O king! Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's son,
mahā-minded king Babhruvāhana
touched water, lapsed into silence,
and sat in the *prāya*-posture.

41 O exterminator of enemies!
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
When the *īśvara*-lord of Maṇipura,
desolated with despair,
together with his mother,
chose self-willed *prāya*-death,

42 Ulūpī remembered the life-restoring
saṁjīvanaṁ maṇi gem,
the wonder-worker of the Pannagas,
and it materialised on the spot.

43 The daughter of the Nāga-rājā
picked up the gem
and, to the delight of the soldiers,
intoned the following words:

44 "Stand up, my son! Do not grieve!
You have not defeated Jiṣṇu-Arjuna!
Mortals cannot defeat him,
not even the gods led by Vāsava-Indra.

45 I have performed this *mohanī* māyā
of deluding deception
to delight the Indra-among-men,
your illustrious father.

46 You are a rājā, O Kaurava,
a slayer of hostile heroes.
You came here to fight your son
in order to test his valour.

47 O my son! O *prabhu*-lord!
So I encouraged you to fight him.
Never imagine even for a moment
that you have committed a crime.

48 O my son! He is a ṛṣi,
a mahānātmā,
he is *purāṇa*-ancient, *śāśvata*-eternal
akṣara-undeteriorating.
Even Śakra-Indra cannot defeat him
on the battlefield.

49 O lord of the world!
I bring this celestial gem
which is charged with the power
to revive dead Pannagas.

50 *Prabhu*-lord! Place this gem
on the chest of your father.
You will see Pārtha-Pāṇḍava Arjuna
come back to life."

51 Inspired by those words of Ulūpī,
the guilt-less, illimitably radiant prince
lovingly placed the gem
on Pārtha-Arjuna's chest.

52 As soon as the gem touched the chest
of the valiant *prabh*-lord Jiṣṇu-Arjuna,
he revived. As if waking from a long sleep,
he opened his pink-rimmed eyes.

53 Seeing his magnificent-minded father,
mahātmā Arjuna revive,
restored to his normal self,
Babhruvāhana eulogised him.

54 *Prabhu*-lord! On tiger-brave Arjuna,
stirred into life
with every auspicious sign
of perfect health,
Pāka-punishing Indra rained
a blessing of pure flowers.

55 Suddenly invisible *dundubhi*-drums
blared in the clear sky,
and the *ākāśa*-space reverberated:
"*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Excellent! Excellent!"

56 Mahā-muscled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
completely recovered,
stood up and embraced Babhruvāhana
and smelt his head.

57 He saw, sitting nearby,
Babhruvāhana's mother Citrāṅgadā
with Ulūpī beside her.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna asked:

58 "O my enemy-slaying son!
Why is it everywhere on the field
I see grief – and wonder – and delight?
If you know, tell me.

59 Why is your mother here,
on this battlefield?
And why is Ulūpī here,
the Nāgendra's daughter?

60 I know I ordered you
to fight me on the field.
What I want to know is –
why are the ladies here?"

61 The learned lord of Maṇipura
answered these questions
by bowing his head respectfully
and saying, "Please ask Ulūpī."

SECTION EIGHTY-ONE

1 "Kaurava-Kula-nandinī!"
said Arjuna.
"O delighter of the Kaurava clan!
Why are you here?
And what brings her here –
the mother of the lord of Maṇipura?

2 *Bhujagātmaje! Capalāpāṅgi!*
O daughter of the snake-race!
O lovely-side-glancing lady!
Do you mean well
for rājā Babhruvāhana?
Do you mean me well too?

3 *Pṛthulaśroṇi! Priyadarśane!*
O large-hipped lady!
O lovely-to-look-at lady!
Is it possible
that I and Babhruvāhana
have unknowingly offended you?

4 Is it possible that Citrāṅgadā,
the lovely-limbed lady,
the daughter of Citravāhana,
has somehow offended you?"

5 The daughter of the Uraga-serpent
smiled and replied:
"Neither have you offended me,
nor has Babhruvāhana.

6 Nor has his mother,
who serves me like a maid.
Listen, and I will tell you
the mystery behind all this.

7 Do not be angry with me.
I bow my head before you.
O Kaurava! O radiant one! *Vibho!*
I have done this for your good.

8 O mahā-muscled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Listen to what I have done.
In the Mahabhārata war,
Śāntanu's royal son Bhīṣma –

9 Using adharma means, you killed him,
O Pārtha-Arjuna.
I have done all this
to cleanse you of that crime.
You, a hero, you did not kill him
in a fair fight.

10 He was battling with Śikhaṇḍin.
You killed him,
using Śikhaṇḍin as a shield.
If you had died,
without any peace of mind,
without expiating that crime,

11 That horrible karma would surely
have sent you to hell.
O mahā-minded one! Mahā-*mate*!
Vasudhā-pāla! O earth-protector!
In the distant past,
Gaṅgā and the Vasus
obtained the same *śānti* peace of mind
that you have obtained
by accepting defeat at the hands
of your son Babhruvāhana.

12 This happened long ago, O king.
The story of the death
of Śāntanava-Bhīṣma I heard
from the lips of the Vasus
who had assembled on the bank
of the Bhāgirathī-Gaṅgā.

13 The celestial Vasus bathed in the waters
of the mahā-*nadī* Gaṅgā;
they revered her, and with her permission,
they gave the terrifying news:

14 'O profound-minded lady! Bhāvinī!
Śāntanu's son Bhīṣma
has been killed by Savyasācī-Arjuna.
He was not fighting Arjuna.
He was fighting someone else.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
is the one who killed him,
and we, today,

15 Have decided to curse him for his crime.'
Gaṅgā approved, 'So be it.'
My senses shivering, I informed by father
and I plunged

16 Into the lower region of the earth.
My father heard me,
and became deeply depressed.
Rushing to the Vasus,

17 Again and again he praised them,
he pleaded with them.
The Vasus said to him:
'O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
The young *īśvara*-lord of Maṇipura
is Arjuna's son.

18 When he, on the field of battle,
defeats Arjuna
with his volleys of arrows,
then, O Indra-of-the-Nāgas,
you will see Arjuna freed
from our curse.

19 You can go now.' Permitted by the Vasus,
he reported this to me.
I acted on what he informed me,
and freed you from the curse.

20 Even the rājā-of-the-gods
Devarāja Indra
cannot defeat you on the field.
A son is like one's own ātman.
That is the reason
you have been defeated.

21 *Vibho*! O radiant one!
I have done no wrong.
But tell me what you think."
Ulūpī said this.
With a happy ātman,
Vijaya-Arjuna said to her:

22 "Devī! What you have done
has pleased me immensely."
Then Jaya-Arjuna said to his son,
the lord of Maṇipura,

23 Within the hearing of Citrāṅgadā,
the Kauravas' daughter-in-law:
"On the full-moon day
of the coming month of Citra,
Yudhiṣṭhira has decided
to perform the Aśvamedha,

24 To which you, both your mothers,
O king,
and the ministers of your court
are invited."

25 Tears dimmed the eyes of Babhruvāhana,
the percipient rājā,
when he heard what Pārtha-Arjuna said.
He said to his father:

26 "O you who are wise in dharma!
Your wish is my command.
I will be present at the mahā-yajña
of the Aśvamedha,
and I will personally feed
the assembled twice-born.

27 But I have only one request now.
O you who are wise in dharma!
Grant me this one favour.
Do not hesitate in this.
Enter the city now,
with both your wives.

28 *Prabhu*-lord! Spend a night here
in perfect happiness,
and thereafter protect the horse,
O finest of the victorious!"

29 Ape-flagged Vānara-ketana
Kaunteya-Arjuna
smiled and said to his son,
Citrāṅgadā's son:

30 "Don't you know, O mahā-muscled one,
the vow I have taken?
O my large-eyed son!
Pṛtha-locana!
I cannot enter your city
until I complete my vow.

31 O bull-brave one! *Svasti te-astu*!
May good be with you!
I follow the horse wherever it goes.
No resting-place for me."

32 Pākaśāsani-Arjuna, best of the Bharatas,
pūjā-respected by them
and permitted by his wives and his son,
proceeded on his mission.

SECTION EIGHTY-TWO

1 Traversing the sea-girdled earth, O rājā,
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
the horse stopped and turned its face
towards the direction of Hastināpura.

2 Diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna also
followed the horse faithfully
which, wandering freely,
arrived in the city of Rājagṛha.

3 *Prabhu*-lord! Firm in Kṣatriya-dharma,
Sahadeva's brave son
faced him on the outskirts of the capital
and challenged him to battle.

4 In a chariot excellently equipped
with bow, arrows and leather-guards,
Meghasandhi rushed out to confront
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna on foot.

5 Mahārāja! Mahā-energetic Meghasandhi
faced Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
and childishly and clumsily
taunted him:

6 "It seems to me, O Bharata,
girls are guarding this horse!
It's time I took him away.
Try stopping me!

7 It seems my *pitṛs* and my elders
never taught you
the etiquette of warfare.
Let me show you
the hospitality of the battlefield!
Attack! Because I will attack!"

8 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna responded by smiling
and said in reply:
"'Overcome anyone who obstructs you'
is the solemn vow

9 Recommended by my eldest brother.
You know this, O king.
Strike me with all your śakti.
I bear you no illwill."

10 The *īśvara*-lord of Magadha
attacked the Pāṇḍava first,
deluging him with arrows
like Sahasra-dṛk Indra
the thousand-eyed deity
releasing torrential rain,

11 Which, O bull-brave Bharata,
the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva repulsed
with a counter-volley from his bow,
neutralising his opponent's accuracy.

12 Frustrating that formidable arrow-shower,
the ape-flagged warrior
fired another flaming volley
of snake-fanged shafts,

13 Aimed at the flag, flagstaff, chariot,
poles, yoke and steeds,
but sparing the body of his adversary
and the charioteer.

14 Ambidexterous Sāvyasācī-Pārtha-Arjuna,
who shot with equal facility
with either hand, spared his body,
but the Magadha-ruler,
puffed with the pride of his valour,
retaliated with a counter-volley.

15 Lacerated by the arrows
of the Magadha-ruler,
the Gāṇḍīva-wielder glowed
like a flame-of-the-forest,
a *palāśa* bursting into blossom
in springtime.

16 Arjuna had no intention, O Kaurava,
of killing the Magadha-ruler,
which is why the ruler survived,
despite his incessant attacks
on the son of Pāṇḍu,
bull-brave Arjuna.

17 Suddenly Savyasācī-Arjuna,
in a fit of anger,
pulled his bow taut
and killed Meghasandhi's houses,
and swiftly decapitated
his adversary's charioteer.

18 With a razor-sharp *kṣura*-shaft
he shredded the bow,
a mahā-marvellous weapon,
of his adversary;
next, the leather-protectors,
the flag and flagstaff.

19 Horse-less, bow-less, charioteer-less,
despite his predicament
the Magadha-rājā rushed with a mace
towards Kaunteya-Arjuna.

20 With a swarm of vulture-winged shafts
Arjuna disintegrated
the dazzling gold-filigreed mace
of his advancing adversary.

21 Gems and filigree sliced and scattered,
the mace fell on the field
like a *vyāli* she-snake
flung away fiercely from oneself.

22 Noticing his enemy's helplessness –
no chariot, no bow, no mace –
Kapi-ketana ape-flagged Arjuna
tried to console him, saying:

23 "What a wonderful display you have given
of Kṣatriya-dharma, my son!
Enough for now. You can go.
O lord of the earth!
So young – and so valiant!
Such praiseworthy karma!

24 'Kill no king who challenges you' –
was Yudhiṣṭhira's command.
Which is why you are alive, O rājā,
despite trying to harm me."

25 The Magadha-ruler heard Arjuna,
and accepted defeat.
Then he offered *prāñjali*
and pūjā-respected Arjuna.

26 “I have been defeated by you.
Bhadraṁ te! May you prosper!
I do not wish to fight any more.
What would you like me to do?
Whatever you want done,
consider that as already done.”

27 Comforting him, Arjuna repeated:
“You should be present
at the Aśvamedha of our king
on the Caitra full-moon.”

28 The son of Sahadeva listened and said,
“*Tatheti*: So be it.”
He pūjā-respected the sacrificial horse
and the incomparable warrior Phālguna-Arjuna.

29 The splendid-maned sacrificial horse
wandered where it pleased
along the sea-coast in the territories
of Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and Kosala.

30 O rājā! In all those territories
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna vanquished
countless armies of *mlecchas*
with his Gāṇḍīva bow.

SECTION EIGHTY-THREE

1 Revered by the Magadha-ruler
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
Śvetavāhana-Arjuna trailed the horse
along the southern segment.

2 The horse, roaming at will,
swung around
to the lovely city of the Cedis,
the Oyster City Śvetavāhana.

3 Mahā-powerful Śarabha, Śiśupāla's son,
challenged Arjuna,
but offered him pūjā-respect
after getting defeated.

4 After receiving his pūjā-respect, O rājā,
the incomparable horse
entered the kingdoms of Kāśī,
Kosala, Kirāta, and Taṅgaṇa.

5 Receiving their homage as ordained,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna turned back;
Kuntī's son entered the territory
of the Daśārṇas,

6 Which was ruled by Citrāṅgada,
a mighty enemy-exterminator.
He and Vijaya-Arjuna clashed
in a fearful confrontation.

7 But bull-brave Kirīṭin-Arjuna
succeeded in subjugating him,
and entered the kingdom of Ekalavya's son,
the rājā of Niśāda.

8 Fully prepared for battle,
Ekalavya's son welcomed Arjuna;
a horripilating clash took place
between Arjuna and the Niśāda.

9 The brilliant-in-battle son of Kuntī,
invincible Arjuna
vanquished the Niśāda,
the potential yajña-obstructer.

10 Mahārāja! Subduing Ekalavya's son,
and accepting the Niśāda's homage,
the son of Pāka-punishing Indra
entered the southern ocean territories,

11 Where fierce clashes took place
between Kirīṭin-Arjuna
and the Draviḍas, Āndhras, Raudras,
Māhiṣakas and Kolla hill-tribes.

12 No exceptional karma was required
to conquer these peoples.
Arjuna trailed the horse next
to Saurāṣṭra

13 And Gokarṇa and Prabhāsa.
The next territory
was enchanting Dvāravatī-Dvārakā,
protected by Vṛṣṇi warriors.

14 When the Kuru-rājā's *śrī*-radiant horse
entered Dvārakā,
the Yādava youths rose to oppose
that all-excelling animal,

15 But they were prevented, O rājā,
by Ugrasena,
the Vṛṣṇi-and-Andhaka ruler
who emerged from his palace

16 With Vāsudeva-Krishna,
Kirīṭin-Arjuna's maternal uncle,
and lovingly welcomed the superlative Kaurava
in the traditional manner.

17 They lavished on the finest of the Bharatas
their pūjā-respect.
Taking the permission of both elders,
Arjuna left with the horse again.

18 The horse wandered in the lands
of the western sea-coast
and entered the flourishing kingdom
of Pañcanada, the Five Waters,

19 After which, O Kaurava descendant,
it reached Gāndhāra,
where it roamed unopposed,
trailed by Kaunteya-Arjuna,

20 Until a critical clash took place
between Kirīṭin-Arjuna
and the Gāndhāra-rājā Śakuni's son
who nursed an ugly family grudge.

SECTION EIGHTY-FOUR

1 Śakuni's virile and valiant son,
a Gāndhāra mahā-chariot-hero
led a mahā-army (said Vaiśampāyana)
against Guḍākeśa-Arjuna –

2 An army of horses, elephants, chariots
multi-bannered and beflagged.
Burning with desire to avenge
the killing of their king Śakuni,

3 The bow-brandishing warriors
attacked Pārtha-Arjuna
Invincible doer-of-dreadful-deeds
dharmātmā Bībhatsu-Arjuna repeated

4 The words of Yudhiṣṭhira to them,
which they rejected.
Despite Pārtha-Arjuna's every attempt
at discreet persuasion,

5 They manoeuvred to surround him.
This infuriated the Pāṇḍava;
and Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna swiftly
with flaming arrows,

6 Razor-edged arrows, shot effortlessly
from his Gāṇḍīva-bow,
sliced their heads on the field.
Decimated by Pārtha-Arjuna,
they were left with no recourse
but to free the horse,

7 So terrified were the Gāndhāra warriors,
O mahārāja,
by the deluge of arrows.
They retreated.
Those who dared to challenge
the son of Pāṇḍu

8 Were singled out by their names
by energetic Arjuna
and beheaded and toppled.
Even as this slaughter
of the Gāndhāra soldiers
continued around him,

9 Śakuni's son, the rājā of Gāndhāra
confronted Pāṇḍu's son.
To the Kṣatriya-dharma-dedicated rājā
who challenged him,

10 The son of Pṛthā-Kuntī said:
"The orders of my rājā
are not to kill any rājās.
O valiant one!
Give up this challenge.
Survive the battle today."

11 *Ajñāna-mohita* confused-by-ignorance
Śakuni's son
igored the words of Arjuna,
and deluged with arrows
his adversary who in war-prowess
equalled Śakra-Indra.

12 With an *ardha-candra* half-moon shaft
infinite-ātmaned Pārtha-Arjuna
sliced the head-covering of his enemy,
and sent it speeding
far across the battle field,
like the head of Jayadratha.

13 The Gāndhāra soldiers saw this,
and they marvelled.
They realised their rājā
had been spared by Arjuna.

14 That was when the rājā's son
panicked and fled,
with all his warriors, like a herd
of terrified deer.

15 So fear-bewildered were they
that they scattered blindly,
and Arjuna decapitated many of them
with his broad-head arrows.

16 Such was the incredible rout
that countless warriors,
their arms sliced by Arjuna's arrows,
remained oblivious of that fact.

17 A terror-stricken multitude
of men, elephants and horses,
desolated and decimated,
running around in circles.

18 There was not one among them
with courage to face
the doer of superlative karma,
wonder-working Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

19 Filled with fear, the Gāndhāra-rājā's mother
with her elderly ministers,
came from the city with an excellent
arghya-homage for Arjuna.

20 She ordered her battle-brave son
to stop fighting,
and she pleased never-tiring Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
with sweet speech.

21 *Prabhu*-lord Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
doer-of-dreadful-deeds,
offered her his pūjā-respect.
Then he consoled Śakuni's son:

22 "O mahā-muscled crusher-of-enemies!
You have not pleased me
by choosing to fight me.
O faultless one! You are my brother.

23 I spared you, O rājā,
because of mātā Gāndhārī
and because of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
I killed only your followers.

24 Let no bitterness again divide us,
let no such thoughts cloud your mind!
Be present at the king's Horse Sacrifice
on the Caitra full moon day."

SECTION EIGHTY-FIVE

1 After saying this (continued Vaiśampāyana),
Pārtha-Arjuna resumed
his protection of the sacrificial horse
which roamed unchallenged
till it reached the road
leading to the Elephant City.

2 His spies and informers informed Yudhiṣṭhira
of the horse's return.
News of the well-being of Arjuna
further delighted Yudhiṣṭhira.

3 Stories of Vijaya-Arjuna's exploits
in the kingdom of Gāndhāra
and in may other territories
pleased him no end.

4 It was the twelfth day
of Māgha's bright fortnight.
Noting the auspicious *nakṣatra*-constellation,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,

5 The mahā-energetic lord of the earth,
decided to summon
all his brothers, O Kaurava Janamejaya –
Bhīma, Nakula, Sahadeva –

6 And that superlative dharma-knower
spoke what needed speaking;
that finest of superlative speakers said
to the superlative foe-smiter Bhīma:

7 "Your younger brother, Bhīmasena,
is back with the horse.
Those who accompanied Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
have brought me the news.

8 O wolf-waisted Vṛokodara-Bhīma,
Now is the time.
The horse is here.
Māgha's *pūrṇamāsa* full moon
is approaching. We will have
a full Phālguna month.

9 It is time we authorised
wise-in-the-Vedas Brahmins
to select a satisfactory site
for the Horse Sacrifice."

10 Bhīma immediately set about
to implement the king's order.
He was delighted at the return
of bull-brave Guḍākeśa-Arjuna.

11 Utilising the services of experts
in yajña-enclosures
and Brahmins skilled in yajña-karma,
Bhīmasena made his plans.

12 An enchanting *śrīmat*-site was measured
for the entire yajña-area,
and fine roads and mansions constructed,
by Kaurava Bhīma.

13 Hundreds of palaces materialised
whose floors were of gold,
studded with gems, all crafted
as required by sacred tradition.

14 And there were gleaming pillars
and massive *toraṇa*-arches –
all the material for the yajña-site
designed from the purest gold.

15 Dharmātmā Bhīma ordered special
inner apartments for the ladies,
and luxurious guest accommodation
for the rājās of many lands.

16 Kuntī's son ordered the construction
of special mansions
for all the Brahmins who had come
from various lands.

17 Instructed by king Yudhiṣṭhira,
mahā-muscled Bhīmasena
arranged for envoys and messengers
to go to the world's kings.

18 And the excellent kings, invited,
attended the yajña
in order to please the Kuru-lord,
bringing with them
a large retinue of women,
and horses and weapons.

19 The noisy hustle-and-bustle emanating
from the pavilions
of these mahātmās reverberated
like sky-touching ocean waves.

20 Glorifier-of-the-Kurus rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
made every arrangement
to supply them with the finest food
and drinks and beds.

21 O finest of the Bharatas!
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
stocked large store-houses with corn,
sugarcane and *go-rasa* milk products.

22 A large number of learned-in-the-Vedas
Brahma-vādin munis
attended the mahā-yajña
of wise dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

23 O lord of the earth!
The finest of the twice-born,
who came to the yajña with their disciples,
were welcomed by the Kaurava.

24 Surrendering all vestiges of self-importance,
illimitably energetic Yudhiṣṭhira
personally escorted all his guests
to their respective pavilions.

25 Completing all the preliminaries
of the yajña,
the architects and other artisans
informed rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.

26 News of the successful completion
of yajña formalities
delighted dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
and his respectful brothers.

27 The start of the Horse-Sacrifice
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
saw spirited debates on subtle subjects
by competing pedants.

28 The kings who attended the yajña,
O Bharata descendant,
were deeply impressed by the efforts
of Bhīmasena,
comparing them to the achievements
of Devendra-Indra.

29 They admired the golden arches,
the beds and seats,
the lavish arrangements for every comfort,
the gems and jewels . . .

30 The jars and cauldrons and pots
and jugs and lids . . .
The rulers of the earth noticed
there was nothing not made of gold.

31 Sacrificial poles were planted
as required by tradition,
crafted of wood, but gold-filigreed.
They radiated effulgence.

32 *Prabhu*-lord! The invited kings
saw at that yajña
every land and water anijal
of the world.

33 Cows and buffaloes,
elderly women,
water animals, beasts of prey,
birds of all kinds,

34 Egg-born, womb-born,
and sweat-born creatures,
many varieties of creepers,
and hill plants and animals . . .

35 The invited kings were wonderstruck
seeing the multitude
of animals, cows, and corn-products
in the yajña compound.

36 There were special sweet delicacies
for Brahmins and Vaiśyas.
The feeding of a hundred thousand
saintly *vipra* Brahmins

37 Was celebrated by the beating
of cloud-booming *dundubhi*-drums.
Day after day one could hear
the reverberations of the drums.

38 O rājā! This was the way the yajña
of wise dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
was organised – with hills of food,
served along with

39 Rivers of curd and lakes of ghee.
What a grand spectacle!
It seemed all the people
of Jambudvīpa

40 Attended that mahā-yajña, O rājā,
from all its territories.
Thousands of people, of different rares,
from different kingdoms,

41 Had come with a variety of gifts,
O bull-brave Bharata.
Wearing glittering ear-rings,
and in elegant dresses,

42 The yajña-servers moved about,
feasting the twice-born
present in hundreds and thousands
with food and drink
worthy of being offered to please
the palates of kings.

[XIV:86:1-8]

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SECTION EIGHTY-SIX

1 Seeing all those earth-lord rājās
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
all of them wise in the Vedas,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira said to Bhīma:

2 "These are all lords of the earth,
all tigers-among-men,
they are rulers of people
and they deserve pūjā-respect."

3 Helped by Sahadeva and Nakula,
mahā-energetic Pāṇḍava Bhīmasena
implemented all the instructions
of illustrious Indra-like Yudhiṣṭhira.

4 Finest-of-all-with-*prāṇa*-breath
Govinda-Krishna approached Dharma's son,
with a host of Vṛṣṇi-followers,
all led by Baladeva-Balarama,

5 Including Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
Pradyumna, Gada,
Niśaṭha and Sāmba,
and Kṛtavarman.

6 They were all offered pūjā-respect
by Bhīma the mahā-chariot-hero.
They were escorted to their mansions
which glittered with gems.

7 Madhusūdana-Krishna conversed briefly
with Yudhiṣṭhira, saying!
"The many battles he has fought
have debilitated Arjuna."

8 Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira asked for more details.
Jagat-pati Lord-of-the-universe
Eliminator-of-enemies Krishna
talked to Dharma's son
about the son of Śakra-Indra,
victorious Jiṣṇu-Arjuna.

9 "One of my trusted assistants
in Dvārakā
informed me he had personally seen
the superlative Pāṇḍava Arjuna,
and that he looked battle-weary,
O king.

10 *Prabhu*-lord! He also gave me news
that mahā-muscled Arjuna
is somewhere near us. Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira!
You can commence the Sacrifice."

11 These words made Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
say to Mādhava-Krishna:
"How fortunate we are to have
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna safely back!

12 O joy of the Yādavas! Yādava-nandana!
I want to know from you
what that supreme warrior feels
about the Horse-Sacrifice."

13 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira asked this,
and the Vṛṣṇi-and-Andhaka chief,
finest-of-eloquent-speakers Krishna
said to Dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira:

14 "The words of Pārtha-Arjuna, mahārāja,
he reported to me were:
*'Krishna! At the right time,
say to Yudhiṣṭhira:*

15 *O bull-brave Kaurava*!
*Many rājās will be present.
Offer them the mahā pūjā-respect
that is expected from us.*

16 *O bestower of honours!
Tell the rājā also
that no mishap should occur
during the Horse-Sacrifice
like the unfortunate* arghya-*incident
at the Rājasūya.*

17 This is what rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
should do.
You should repeatedly advise him,
O Krishna, saying:
'O rājā! Let no rancourous rājās
alienate the people.'

18 There was one other request, O king,
O Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira,
that Dhanañjaya-Arjuna wanted
to pass on to you.

19 *My mahā-lustrous, my dear son,*
Babhruvāhana,
the ruler of Maṇipura,
will come to the yajña.

20 Prabhu-*lord! His bhakti and love*
for me are profound.
Please offer him, on my behalf,
the traditional pūjā-respect."

21 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira listened
to Krishna's words.
He was deeply touched,
and he replied suitably.

SECTION EIGHTY-SEVEN

1 "Such sweet and pleasing words, O Krishna,"
Yudhiṣṭhira said.
"Expected of you, worthy of you.
They are like *amṛta*-nectar.
My mind and heart are blessed,
O *prabhu*-lord.

2 I understand, O Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna,
that Vijaya-Arjuna
took part in many battles
with many earth-lords.

3 Why should Pārtha-Arjuna always
be alienated from happiness?
Wisdom rules Vijaya-Arjuna's character.
It hurts my heart,

4 O Janārdana-Krishna, when I think
of the travails
of Kuntī's son, Jiṣṇu-Arjuna.
I cannot understand
why Pāṇḍu-nandana, the joy of the Pāṇḍavas,
has to suffer so much.

5 His body has all the auspicious marks.
What is it, O Krishna,
what inauspiciousness makes him victim
of so much misery?

6 I do not see any undesirable signs
on the body
of dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna.
So why should Kuntī's son
carry more than his share of suffering?
Explain this to me."

7 Enhancer-of-the-glory-of-the Bhojas
Hṛṣīkeśa-Viṣṇu-Krishna
meditated deep and long before replying
to rājā Yudhiṣṭhira:

8 "I see nothing to find fault with
in tiger-brave Arjuna
unless, O king, one thinks his cheek-bones
are a trifle exaggerated.

9 That could explain the restlessness
of this tiger-among-men.
I can think of no other reason
for his travel-travails."

10 Finest-of-men Yudhiṣṭhira listened,
O *prabhu*-lord,
and replied to the wise tiger-brave Vṛṣṇi:
"You must be right."

11 Not Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī, however.
She glanced sideways
at Krishna, displeased with him.
Keśi-killer Krishna
was delighted by this hint
of her love

12 For Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna's loved-and-loving
sakhā-friend Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Bhīmasena, and the other Kauravas,
and the *yājaka*-priests,

13 Who had heard of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's feats,
so varied and vivid,
were overjoyed by news of his return.
Many among them
were busily exchanging stories
about Arjuna

14 When a messenger from mahātmā Arjuna
suddenly arrived.
The intelligent messenger namaskāra-ed
finest-of-Kauravas Yudhiṣṭhira,

15 And said: "Tiger-brave Phālguna-Arjuna
is on his way here."
The news brought tears of joy
to the king's eyes.

16 Lavish gifts were presented to the bringer
of such sweet news.
The second day after this,
a mahā-medley

17 Celebrated the return of Arjuna,
the tiger-brave Kaurava.
The dust raised by the hooves
of the sacrificial horse

18 Was as wonderful as the dust
raised by the hooves
of the divine horse Ucchaiḥśravas.
Delight-giving were the words
spoken by the citizens to welcome Arjuna
when he arrived:

19 "What good fortune is ours
to have Pārtha-Arjuna
safely back among us!
All praise to rājā Yudhiṣṭhira!
Who else could have conquered
all the world's earth-lords,

20 And returned after accompanying
the horse except Arjuna?
Sagara and other mahātmā rājās
of the ancient past –

21 We have not heard of such an exploit
ever performed by them.
Nor will future lords of the earth
be able to equal a feat

22 As difficult as the one you have accomplished,
O finest of the Kaurava race!"
With these soothing and happy words
ringing in his ears,

23 Dharmātmā Phālguna-Arjuna
entered the yajña-enclosure.
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira and his ministers,
and joy-of-the-Yādavas Krishna,

24 Placing Dhṛtarāṣṭra at their head,
welcomed Arjuna
who touched the feet of *pitā* Dhṛtarāṣṭra
and percipient Yudhiṣṭhira,

25 Offered his pūjā-respect to Bhīma and others,
and embraced Keśava-Krishna.
All of them felicitated Arjuna,
who reciprocated as expected,

26 After which the mahā-muscled hero
retired to rest
like a long-on-the-seas sailor relaxing
after an arduous voyage.
It was around this time
that rājā Babhruvāhana,

27 The wise king, with his mothers,
arrived in the Kuru capital.
All the Kaurava elders
and the earth-lords present,

28 Honoured by the mahā-muscled king,
reciprocated the respect.
Formalities over, he entered the luxurious mansion
of his grandmother *pitāmahī* Kuntī.

SECTION EIGHTY-EIGHT

1 Entering the mansion of the Pāṇḍavas
(continued Vaiśampāyana),
the mahā-muscled king revered his grandmother
with supremely sweet speech.

2 Devī Citrāṅgadā and Ulūpī
the Kaurava-chief's daughter
humbly approached Pṛthā-Kuntī
and Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī,

3 After which they met Subhadrā
and other Kaurava ladies.
Kuntī gave them gems as presents
and other precious gifts.

4 Draupadī, Subhadrā and other ladies
also gave them various gifts.
Both the devīs retired to relax
on luxurious conches.

5 Because she desired the welfare
of Pārtha-Arjuna,
Kuntī gave them special pūjā-respect.
The same pūjā-respect
she offered rajā Babhruvāhana,
the mahā-energetic ruler

6 Who in the traditional manner
revered earth-lord Dhṛtarāṣtra.
Then came the turn of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
Bhīma and other Pāṇḍavas

7 Who were graciously and humbly revered
by mahā-energetic Babhruvāhana.
They reciprocated with pūjā-respect
and profound affection.

8 The delighted mahā-chariot-heroes
lavished gifts on him.
The earth-protector stood before Krishna,
the *cakra*-and-mace-wielder,

9 Humbly, like the son of Govinda-Krishna,
Pradyumna himself.
Krishna gifted the rājā
a mahā pūjā-worthy

10 Incomparably precious gold-plated chariot,
pulled by celestial steeds.
Next, Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma,
Phālguna-Arjuna and the twins,

11 One by one, in turn, honoured him
with expensive gifts.
On the third day, Satyavatī's son,
muni Vyāsa,

12 Finest of eloquent speakers,
said to Yudhiṣṭhira:
"Start the yajña today, son of Kuntī.
Today is the ideal time.
for the *muhūrta* of the sacrifice.
The priests are waiting.

13 Spare nothing to ensure its success,
O Indra-among-rājās.
It is famed as the *bahu-suvarṇaka*
the 'gold-overflowing' yajña
because for its performance is essential
an abundance of gold.

14 O rājā! Offer three times the normal yajña
to the deserving Brahmins.
This will make your yajña
three times superior.

15 With the three-fold *dakṣiṇā* offered,
O lord of men,
you will obtain the merits
of three Horse-Sacrifices,
and you will be cleansed of the crime
of family-genocide.

16 O delighter of the Kaurava race!
You will get the merits
of the purificatory bath that concludes
the Horse-Sacrifice."

17 Following the instructions of Vyāsa,
the illimitably intelligent ṛṣi,
the energetic dharmātmā ruler Yudhiṣṭhira
performed the *dīkṣā*-initiation,

18 After which the mahā-muscled rājā
performed the mahā-ritual
with profuse all-kāma-satisfying *dakṣiṇā* –
and all guṇa-granting.

19 The wise-in-the-Vedas *yājaka*-priests,
multi-learned and tradition-devoted,
went about performing their duties
busily and efficiently, O rājā.

20 Not a single flaw could be noticed,
not the least impropriety.
The bull-brave Brahmins performed
precisely and perfectly.

21 These finest of the twice-born, O rājā,
completed the Pravargya ritual
in accordance with the dictates of dharma,
followed by the *soma-ābhiṣava*.

22 Them, O rājā, the splendid soma-drinkers
squeezed soma-juice
and performed the Savana-ritual
as ordained in the *śāstras.*

23 Not one person who attended the yajña
looked dispirited;
no one was poor or hungry,
grieving or crude.

24 Mahā-energetic, foe-crushing Bhīma,
as ordered by the rājā,
saw to it that food was instantly supplied
to anyone hungry.

25 In accordance with *śāstra* rules,
the *yājaka*-priests
efficiently implemented all the requirements
for the Horse-Sacrifice.

26 These was not one *sadasya*-participant
in proficient Yudhiṣṭhira's yajña
not proficient in the six Vedic wisdoms,
or in sacred vows,
not one not an *upādhyāya*-scholar
or an expert debater.

27 O bull-brave Bharata!
For the yajña-yupa,
six sacrificial poles of *bilva*-wood
six of *khadira,*
and six of *sarvavarṇina*-wood
were selected and planted.

28 Two poles of *deva-dāru* were chosen
by the *yājaka*-priests
for the sacrifice of the Kuru lord,
and one of *śleṣmātaka.*

29 And because of their glowing elegance,
O bull-brave Bharata,
obeying Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira order,
Bhīma planted some golden poles.

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30 Decorated with colourful drapes,
the seven poles
of the yajña of rājarṣi Yudhiṣṭhira
dazzled like Mahendra-Indra
and the gods in heaven,
surrounded by the Seven Ṛṣis.

31 Golden bricks were chosen to erect
the *cayana*-altar
which was as enchanting as the altar
of Prajāpati Dakṣa.

32 Four areas comprised the *cayana*,
each of eight and ten cubits square.
Each had in it a golden bird
in the image of Garuḍa.

33 Following the rules of the *śāstras*,
the erudite priests
tied birds and beasts to the poles,
associated with their respective deities.

34 After the *cayana* fire-ritual,
bulls as specified by the *śāstras*
and various water-creatures
were tied to the poles.

35 Three hundred animals were tied thus,
including that gem of a horse,
in the sacrificial poles of the yajña
of Kuntī's mahātmā son.

36 What a glorious occasion it was! –
filled with deva-ṛṣis,
and groups of gandharvas surging,
and apsarās dancing!

37 Made even more enchanting
with Kimpuruṣas and Kinnaras;
and Siddhas and *vipra*-Brahmins
in their residences around it.

38 You could see there every day
the bull-brave disciples of Vyāsa,
all proficient in all the śāstras,
all knowledgeable in yajña-details.

39 Nārada was present there,
and mahā-radiant Tumburu,
and the masters of music
Viśvāvasu, Citrasena and others.

40 Expert-in-singing and dance-dedicated,
the gandharvas delighted
the *vipra*-Brahmins of the yajña
in the intervals between the ceremonies.

SECTION EIGHTY-NINE

1 As ordained by tradition (continued Vaiśampāyana),
the excellent twice-born priests
cooked the sacrificial animals
and the sacred horse,
in accordance with the principles
laid down in the śāstras.

2 The *yājaka*-priests sliced the horse, O rājā,
and, as ordained by tradition,
made her sit beside the sacrificed animal –
Drupada's daughter Draupadī –

3 A fine-minded lady, a *manisvinī*
gifted, O rājā,
with the three excellent qualities
of mantra, wealth, and śraddhā;
then the śāstra-respecting Brahmins
removed the horse's marrow

4 And, following tradition, cooked it,
O bull-brave Bharata.
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira and his younger brother
then smelt the smoke

5 That, according to the śāstras,
cleanses all one's crimes.
The remaining pieces of the horse,
O lord of men,

6 Were offered as oblations in the fire
by the sixteen wise *ṛtvik*-priests.
Successfully accomplishing the sacrifice
of Śakra-Indra-like rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,

7 *Bhagavān* Vyāsa and his disciples
praised the king profusely.
Yudhiṣṭhira gifted to the Brahmins,
as ordained by tradition,

8 A thousand crore gold *niṣka*-coins,
and to Vyāsa the earth.
Accepting the earth, O rājā,
Satyavatī's son Vyāsa

9 Said to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
the finest of the Bharatas:
"I return to you the earth you gave,
O finest of rājās,

10 Because Brahmins eschew ruling the earth.
I will accept *niṣka*-coins."
To the *vipra*-Brahmins then,
mahā-minded Yudhiṣṭhira said,

11 Gifted-with-insight Yudhiṣṭhira said,
in the presence of his brothers:
"The entire earth is the *dakṣiṇā* offered
in the Aśvamedha mahā-yajña,

12 Which is why I gave to the *ṛtviks*
the earth which Arjuna conquered.
O excellent Brahmins! Divide this earth.
I will go to the forest.

13 Follow the Catur-hotṛ yajña example,
and divide the earth into four parts.
O finest of the twice-born!
I will not take a Brahmin's possessions.

14 O saintly *vipras!* I and my brothers
are firm-minded about this."
Draupadī and his brothers added
to this pronouncement

15 "This is as it should be."
All present there horripilated.
O Bharata! A sky-voice proclaimed:
"*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Excellent! Excellent!"

16 A swell of approval arose
from the assembled Brahmins.
Turning again to Yudhiṣṭhira,
muni Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa

17 Offered him pūjā-respect, and said,
in front of the Brahmins:
"You have gifted me the earth.
I give it back to you.

18 Let the earth be yours.
Give gold to the Brahmins."
Then it was Vāsudeva-Krishna
who advised Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira:

19 "You should do exactly
what *Bhagavān* Vyāsa says."
That Kaurava paragon, and his brothers,
with a happy ātman,

20 Gifted crores of coins, three times
the ritual's ordained *dakṣiṇā*.
No earth-ruler will ever achieve
the height attained

21 By the Kuru-rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
who followed Marutta's example.
Muni Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa
accepted the wealth

22 And, dividing it into four equal parts,
passed it on to the *ṛtvik*-priests.
Accepting the gold in lieu
of the earth, Yudhiṣṭhira,

23 Cleansed of ill-deeds, heaven-deserving,
rejoiced, along with his brothers.
The *ṛtvik*-priests distributed the vast wealth
of *dakṣiṇā*-gold

24 Among the twice-born, giving to each
as much as demanded.
The golden artefacts and other wealth
of the yajña compound,

25 Which included the sacrificial poles,
the *toraṇa*-arches,
jars, vessels and building bricks,
with Yudhiṣṭhira's permission,
were removed and equitably divided
among the assembled twice-born.

26 After the Brahmins had taken
to their heart's content,
the rest was distributed among Kṣatriyas,
Vaiśyas, Śūdras and Mlecchas.

27 Overjoyed by the generosity
of wise Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
the Brahmins returned to their abodes,
their every desire granted.

28 His own mahā-share of wealth
was respectfully
passed on to Kuntī by Vyāsa,
the mahā-radiant *bhagavān*.

29 Pṛthā-Kuntī was supremely pleased
with the loving gift
she received from her father-in-law,
and she resolved
to utilise it in pious deeds
productive of mahā-merit.

30 After his *avabhṛta* purificatory bath
at the completion of the yajña,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, cleansed of ill-deeds,
revered by all,
dazzled in the sabhā with his brothers
like Mahendra-Indra among the gods.

31 All the Pāṇḍavas, O mahārājas
in that gathering of earth-lords,
glowed with the glory of planets
surrounded by stars.

32 What a variety of gifts were bestowed
on those invited rājās:
jewels, elephants, horses, organments,
girls, dresses, gold!

33 O rājā! Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
distributed those presents
to the maṇḍala of earth-rulers,
and he dazzled among them
like Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera himself,
the god of riches.

34 Next Yudhiṣṭhira summoned in his presence
valiant rājā Babhruvāhana
and gave him leave to return to his home
after gifting him enormous wealt.

35 And to please his sister Duḥśalā,
O bull-brave Bharata,
wise Yudhiṣṭhira installed her baby grandson
on his paternal kingdom.

36 After lavishly gifting and pūjā-respecting
all the assembled kings,
the sense-disciplined Kuru-rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
gave them leave to depart.

37 Mahātmā Govinda-Krishna,
mahā-powerful Baladeva-Balarāma,
thousands of valiant Vṛṣṇi warriors,
including Pradyumna –

38 After pūjā-respecting them, mahārāja,
as ordained by tradition,
mahā-radiant for-vanquishing Yudhiṣṭhira
and his brothers saw them leave.

[XIV:89:39-44]

Transcreated by P. Lal

39 Such was the Horse-Yajña
of wise Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
characterised by a plethora of gems, food,
and oceanic supplies of wines,

40 And entire lakes of sticky ghee,
and mountains of edibles.
O bull-brave Bharata!
There were rivers flowing
with a rush of rasas
to satisfy every taste.

41 There was no limit to the number
of cooks engaged
in the preparation of *khāṇḍava*
the sacred sweetmeat,
and no limit to the number
of animals sacrificed.

42 Wine-flushed youths roamed about,
as did giggling girls.
Mṛdaṅga-drums and conches flooded
the compound with sacred sound.

43 "Give whatever is asked.
Serve only delicious food."
Night and day these were the words
one heard in that *mahotsava*
of repeated rejoicing
by gratified participants.

44 Even today is that yajña extolled
by men of different lands.
His mission accomplished, ill-deeds cleansed,
profuse wealth distributed
along with rivers of cuisine
rich in the six rasas,
finest-of-the-Bharatas Yudhiṣṭhira
entered his capital.

SECTION NINETY

1 "Something wonderful happened," said Janamejaya,
"at the yajña
of my wise *pitāmaha* dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.
Tell me about it."

2 O tiger-brave *prabhu*-lord rājā!
(replied Vaiśampāyana)
Listen to the mahā-wonderful incident
that concluded the Aśvamedha.

3 O finest of the Bharatas!
After they were gratified –
the leading twice-born, the family,
close relatives and friends,
the needy and the blind,
the distressed and helpless,

4 And everyone, O Bharata descendant,
was praising the mahā-gifts,
and flowers were being showered
on Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira's head,

5 A bull-eyed mongoose suddenly appeared,
O defectless lord of the earth,
a mongoose with a golden skin,
and bellowed thunderously –

6 A hole-dwelling mahā-rodent
who bellowed
with a bird-and-beast-frightening roar,
using human speech:

7 "O lords of men!
This yajña of yours
Is not equal to me *prastha*
Of *saktu*-parched grain
Given by a large-hearted Brahmin
Of Kurukṣetra
Practising his *ucchavṛtti*–vow."

8 O lord of the world!
Supreme dismay overcame
all the bull-brave Brahmins
who heard the mongoose.

9 The twice-born surrounded the mongoose.
"Only pious sādhus
are supposed to be at this yajña?
How are you here?

10 What special power of śruti
do you have?
Under whose auspices do you dare
to speak like this?
Who are you to find fault
with our yajña?

11 We have followed the *āgama* scriptures.
We have done everything
as everything is ordained to be done.
We have abided by rules,
we have performed our *kartavya*-duty
at this *kṛta*-ritual.

12 We have pūjā-respected those
who deserve pūjā-respect,
as ordained in the light of tradition.
We have chanted mantras,
we have poured libations in the sacred fire,
we have gifted selflessly.

13 The twice-born were deeply gratified
with the varied gifts,
the Kṣatriyas with the battles
they had fought,
and the *pitāmahas* with *śrāddha*
rites of propitation,

14 The Vaiśyas with the security,
the women with gifts
that satisfied their kāma-longings,
the Śūdras with kindness,
and the others with the abundance
of surplus wealth,

15 Family members and close relatives
with the courtesy
and impecable royal behaviour,
the gods with the offerings
of ghee and pious ceremonies,
and menials and dependants
with assurances of protection
and total security.

16 That being so, what is it
you find lacking here?
The twice-born here deserve
to know the truth.
Present all the eager Brahmins here
with the full *śruti* truth.

17 Your words are eminently sensible.
You are wise-speaking.
You have a divine appearance.
You have dared
to challenge saintly *vipra*-Brahmins.
Answer us!"

18 The mongoose smiled,
and answered the twice-born:
"What I have said, O twice-born ones,
is not out of pride.
The words I have spoken
are not empty and meaningless.

19 Do I have to repeat
what I have said?
O bull-brave twice-born eminences!
Your yajña does not equal
the gift of a single *prastha*
of parched grain.

20 O most excellent twice-born ones!
Listen to me carefully.
Listen to every word I say,
listen calmly.

21 That large-hearted Kurukṣetra Brahmin
practising his *ucchavṛtti*-vow –
I saw him, I saw what he did.
It was wonderful, it was inspiring!

22 Because of what he did,
O twice-born ones,
he, his wife, son and daughter-in-law
became worthy of heaven.
Because of what he did,
half my body became golden."

23 I will describe to you
(continued the mongoose)
the wonderful fruit of the gift,
O twice-born ones,
the small honestly-earned gift
of the Kurukṣetra Brahmin.

24 On dharma-kṣetra Kurukṣetra,
on that site of dharma
where many dharma-knowers dwell,
lived an *ucchavṛtti*-practiser
who survived, as pigeons do,
on dropped food-grains.

25 He was a sense-disciplined dharmātmā
of impeccable character.
He, his wife, son and daughter-in-law
were deep in tapasyā.

26 The strict-vowed *vipra*-Brahmin
ate every day
at the *ṣaṣṭha-kāla* sixth segment,
If, for any reason,
no food was available
at the sixth segment,

27 The excellent Brahmin would fast
and eat the next day
at the regular sixth segment.
It so happened once,
during a terrible famine,
the dharma-devoted Brahmin

28 Had no food at all in his house.
Listen to me, O Brahmins!
All the crops of the land had failed.
Poverty gripped the kingdom.

29 Sixth segments came and went,
there was no food to be had.
There was nothing his family could do
except starve.

30 One day, in the month of Jyeṣṭha,
during a *śukla-pakṣa*,
when the sun was at its height,
the *tapasyā*-practising Brahmin,
stricken with heat and hunger,
was gathering *uccha*-grains.

31 He could not find any grains,
the heat was intense.
He was tired and famished.
His family was starving.

32 That excellent Brahmin was barely able
to stay alive.
One day, he managed to collect
on the sixth segment
a *prastha* of parched grain
for the evening meal.

33 The *tapasyā*-practising Brahmins ground
the grain into *saktu*-powder.
With traditional *japa*-meditation invocations
they fed the sarred fire,

34 After which the *tapasyā*-practisers
divided the *saktu*
into *kudava* handfuls among themselves.
They sat down to eat,
when suddenly a visitor arrived,
an unanounced twice-born guest.

35 They were delighted at the arrival
of such a guest.
They namaskāra-ed him, and enquired
about his welfare.

36 Pure-hearted were they, self-disciplined,
steady in śraddhā, serene,
anger-free, envy-free, never troubled
by the piety of others.

37 They had given up conceit,
pride and hot temper,
they were wise in the ways of dharma,
those excellent twice-born.
Acquainting their guest with their brahmacarya
and *gotra*-lineage,
and receiving from him
similar details,

38 They invited their hungry visitor
to their hut, saying:
"Here is the *arghya* to wash your feet,
O defectless one,
and here is the grass mat
for you to relax.

39 Here is fresh *saktu* rightfully obtained,
O *prabhu*-lord.
Bhadraṁ te! Prosper, O bull-brave twice-born!
Accept it from us."

40 The Brahmin accepted the *kudava* grain
of twelve double palmfuls,
but it was not enough for his hunger,
O Indra-among-rājās.

41 The *ucchavṛtti*-vow-observing twice-born
noticed his unease,
and wondered what food to give
to please their guest.

42 The Brahmin's wife said to her husband:
"Give my share to him.
Let our excellent twice-born guest leave
only after he is satisfied."

43 But the Brahmin knew his good wife
was herself hungry,
and he was not happy with her offer
of *saktu* to their guest.

44 That bull-brave learned *vipra*-Brahmin,
himself similarly afflicted,
knew that his old, work-weary, debilitated
tapasyā-emaciated wife

45 Was no better than a bundle of bones,
and he said to her:
"Lovely lady! *Śobhane*!
Even worms, insects and beasts

46 Care for and protect their females.
You should not have said what you said.
Blessed with lovingkindness is the man
who receives care and protection
from his wife who should be receiving
his care and protection.

47 But such a man loses fame and lustre,
loses the three worlds.
Dharma, kāma and artha, *śuśruṣa*-service,
the family's true welfare –

48 These are all in a wife's hands.
The dharma of *pitṛs*
and one's own dharma are in her hands.
The man who,
for whatever reason, is unable
to provide for his wife

49 Deserves and suffers ill-fame in this world,
and hell in the next."
To this advice from him she replied
"O twice-born one!
It seems to me our dharma and artha –
they are the same –

50 You will please me if you take
a fourth of this *saktu*
and give it to our guest.
Truth and pleasure,
dharma and the heaven obtained
by good guṇas,

51 Indeed, all the desires of a woman,
O bull-brave twice-born,
depend on her husband.
The mother's *ṛtu*-blood,
the father's semen produce a child.
No god excels a husband.

52 It is the husband who provides pleasure
and a fruitful son
to his wife – through his grace.
You are my *pati*-protector,
you are my *bharta*-care-remover
of my *bhāra*-burdens,

53 You are my *varada*-boon-granter
who gives me a son,
which is why I ask you to give
my *saktu*-share to our guest.
You are old, and weak and weary,
you are famished

54 With fasting, a bundle of bones,
very much like me."
Impressed by his wife's words,
he took the *saktu* from her,

55 And said: "O finest of the twice-born!
Accept this *saktu* from us."
The Brahmin happily ate the *saktu*,
but his hunger remained.
The *uccha-vṛtti*-vow practising Brahmin
was lost in thought.

56 His son said: "O finest of men!
Give my *saktu*-share
to our *vipra*-guest. This good deed
I have decided to do.

57 It is right that I should always
see to your welfare.
The good are those who look after
their elderly father.

58 What is a son for if not
to care for his father?
The three worlds declare this eternal śruti,
O *vipra*-ṛṣi.

59 You need *prāṇa*-life-breath
to practise tapasyā.
There is no greater dharma for a body
than preserving its life-breath."

60 "Even when you are a hundred years old,"
said the father,
"yu will be still my little son.
By fathering a son,
a man ensures his own welfare
through his child.

61 O my *prabhu*-lord-like son!
I know only too well
how the pangs of hunger affect a child.
I am an old man.
I will survive. You need to eat,
and become strong.

62 Old I may be, my son, and weak,
but I can endure hunger.
Besides, my long practice of tapasyā
has removed my fear of death."

63 "I am your son, your *putra*,"
replied his son,
"I redeem you from the hell
known as *put*.
A son is said to be his father's ātman.
Let your ātman save you."

64 "You look like me," said the father;
"in conduct and discipline,
you are like me. Many times
have you been tested,
and you have proved your character.
I accept your *saktu*."

65 The finest of the twice-born
happily took the *saktu*
and smiled and gave it
to his *vipra*-guest,

66 Who ate the food, but his hunger
was still not satisfied.
The *uccha-vṛtti*-vow dharmātmā Brahmin
was overcome with shame.

67 A girl of piety and sādhu-simplicity
was his daughter-in-law
who, to please him, approached him
with her *saktu*, and said:

68 "O saintly *vipra*-Brahmin!
Through your son
I will be blessed with children.
So I ask you:
take my share of *saktu*
and give it to our guest.

69 You grace will open up for me
the eternal celestial worlds.
A son takes a person to a state
of pure sorrowlessness.

70 Like the threefold goal of life –
dharma, artha, kāma –
like the three sacred fires –
āhavanīya, gārhyapatya, dakṣiṇāgni –
there is the undecaying *svargastretā*,
the threefold heaven,
for those who are blessed with son,
grandson, and great-grandson:

71 We have heard that a son frees
his father from *pitṛnṛṇa*,
the debts to one's *pitṛ*-ancestors.
There is no doubt
sons and grandsons take a person
to the sanctifying realms."

72 "O supremely noble-vowed one!"
said the father-in-law.
"Wind and sun have debilitated you,
your complexion is faded,
so famished are you that you
are nearly fainting.

73 How can I be so cruel to dharma
as to take your *saktu*?
You should not speak like this,
O girl of auspiciousness!
You who tread the path
of goodness and welfare!

74 Gracious girl! *Śubhe*!
Purity, nobility and tapasyā
guide you in your vow-observance
of eating at the sixth segment.
How you must be suffering! –
and to have to fast today also!

75 You are young, you are famished,
you are a girl.
I should be protecting you,
instead of seeing you suffer,
O joy-and-pride-of-the-family,
O *bāndhava-nandinī*!"

76 "You are the guru of my guru,"
the daughter-in-law replied,
"the deity of my deity,
a greater god to me than my god.
O *prabhu*-lord!
Accept this *saktu*-offering.

77 My body, my life-breath, my dharma –
what are they for
if not to serve my guru-elders?
O saintly *vipra*!
By your grace will I obtain
the realms of auspiciousness.

78 O twice-born one!
I am your devoted *bhaktā*!
I place myself in your hands.
Please cherish this thought,
and accept the *saktu*-share
that I am offering you."

79 "*Śobhane!* Lovely girl!"
said the father-in-law.
"The sweetness of your piety
will forever bring you honour.
Such dharma! Such vow-discipline!
Such concern for guru-elders!

80 I will accept your *saktu*-share,
O my mahā-fortune-favoured daughter-in-law.
I will not disappoint you,
I will not deprive you of virtue.
Of the finest of dharma-devotees,
you are the finest."

81 Saying this, the twice-born one
took the *saktu*
and offered it to his guest;
who was delighted
by this act of his host,
the sādhu mahātma *vipra.*

82 It was Dharma himself in person
who had come there
as the bull-brave Brahmin guest.
With a serene ātman,
he eloquently said to his host,
that finest of the twice-born:

83 "O incomparable twice-born one!
The pure gift you have given,
guided by the dictates of dharma,
summoning all your śakti, –
I am deeply pleased with it.
Aho! Even the heaven-dwellers
are proclaiming and celebrating
your gift in heaven!

84 Look at them, showering flowers
from the sky on the earth!
The sura-ṛṣis, gods, gandharvas,
the followers of the gods,

85 And the messengers of the gods
are wonderstruck by your gift,
and sing your praises.
The Brahma-ṛṣis
who traverse the realm of Brahmā
in their chariots –

86 They are eager for your darshan.
O bull-brave Brahmin.
Come with me to heaven.
You have redeemed
the debts of your *pitṛ*-ancestors
who are in their realms.

87 Unborn generations you have redeemed
in future yuga after yuga.
Your brahmacarya, gift-giving,
yajña and tapasyā,

88 Your immaculate karma make your worthy,
O twice-born one,
of going to heaven.
O supremely strict-vowed one,
profound is the śraddhā
with which you practise tapasyā.

89 O finest of Brahmins!
Your gifts have delighted the gods.
The purity of motive
with which you offered this gift,

90 In a time of such great crisis,
has overwhelmed heaven.
Hunger distorts wise thinking,
and vitiates insight into dharma.

91 Patience and fortitude are forgotten
when hunger overpowers intelligence.
Which is why conquering hunger
is like conquering heaven itself.

92 The man who cherishes gift-giving
never declines in dharma.
You have transcended sentimental feelings
for one's wife and son,

93 You have given dharma guru-glory,
you have defied hunger and thirst.
The subtlest difficulty for a man
is the amassing of wealth.
Even more important is to find
a worthy person to whom to donate wealth.

94 Still more important is the right time
to donate wealth.
Greatest of all is the *śraddhā*-faith
required when wealth is donated.
Very fine is the door to heaven,
hard for muddled mortals to see.

95 The bar of heaven's door is greed,
tightened with *rāga*-passion,
a bar very difficult to open.
Only the sense-disciplined,
only those who conquer their anger
are the ones who see –

96 Only the Brahmins who practise tapasyā
and give gifts
with whatever śakti they have –
only they see inside the door.
Who has śakti for a thousand,
and gives a hundred,
who has śakti for a hundred,
and gives away ten,

97 Who has no śakti at all to give,
and gives a gift of water –
the merits attained by all three
are identical.
When king Rantideva
had nothing left to give,

98 It is said, O *vipra*-Brahmin,
that with a pure heart
he gave a gift of water,
and so he merited heaven.
Tāta! Dear one! Dharma is not happy
with mahā-luxurious gifts,

99 He prefers the littlest gifts
if donated with *śraddhā*
and acquired by honest means.
King Nṛga
gifted thousands of cows
to the twice-born,

100 But he deserved hell
because one cow he gave
did not belong to him.
King Uśīnara's son Śibi
sliced the flesh of his body
and gifted it,

101 Which made the strict-vowed king
worthy of heaven,
the realm of the pure-merit-doers.
It is not wealth
that is worth having for a man,
but his virtue-working.

102 No number of *yajñas*, O *vipra*-Brahmin,
can make one virtuous.
Anger nullifies whatever fruit
results from gift-giving.
Greed is not the road
that leads to heaven.

103 Wealth obtained honestly,
gifts given selflessly,
tapasyā performed devotedly –
these are the paths to heaven.
The fruits of many Rājasūyas
overflowing with *dakṣiṇā*-offerings,

104 The fruits of many Aśvamedhas –
they are all less
than the fruit of your gift.
Your *prastha* of *saktu*
had made you a conqueror
of undecaying Brahma-loka.

105 O saintly *vipra*-Brahmin!
Enter with felicity
the radiant mansion of Brahmā.
O finest of Brahmins!
A celestial chariot is waiting
to transport all of you.

106 O twice-born one! Look at me!
I am Dharma.
Climb inside the chariot.
You have transcended
the limitations of the flesh,
and gained lasting fame.

107 Go with your wife, son, and daughter-in-law
to the realm of heaven."
Dharma said this,
and the disciplined twice-born,
with his wife, son, and daughter-in-law
proceeded to heaven.

108 With his wife, son and daughter-in-law
in the realm of heaven –
the saintly *vipra*-Brahmin,
his son, and daughter-in-law –

109 The wise-in-dharma Brahmin arrived –
his wife the fourth person –
and that was the time when I
emerged from my hole.
The fragrance of the *saktu*
that was mixed in the water,

110 The touch of the celestial flowers
that were showered,
the grains that had gift-dropped
from the tapasyā-rich Brahmin –
all these fell on my head
and made it golden.

111 O saintly *vipra*-Brahmins!
The *saktu*-gift of the Brahmin
deeply dedicated to truth
transformed into gold half my body.

112 And so, O twice-born ones,
see with your own eyes
the marvellous result of the tapasyā
of that wise Brahmin.
Now I go about trying to make golden
the other half of my body.

113 With that goal in mind,
cheerfully and hopefully
I scurry from one *tapovana*
to another forest-of tapasyā
where yajñas are performed.
Hearing of the wise Kuru-rājā's yajña,

114 I hurried here with high hopes.
But my body
has not been turned into gold.
O bull-brave Brahmins!
That was why I said
those mocking words

115 To the effect that this yajña
is not equal
to a single *prastha* of *saktu.*
I recalled the time
when a *prastha* of *saktu*
had made me golden.

116 Your mahā-yajña is a failure!
That is what I think."
Saying this to the incomparable twice-born
who performed the yajña,

117 The mongoose vanished. The *vipra*-Brahmins –
all returned to their homes.

118 O destroyer of hostile cities!
(continued Vaiśampāyana)
This is the wonderful event
that took place
at the *mahā-krata vājīmedha,*
the magnificent horse sacrifice.

119 Do not get upset, O king,
by what happened at your yajña.
Crores of ṛṣis have attained heaven
by tapasyā alone.

120 Never harming any living creature,
peace of mind,
noble conduct, simplicity, tapasyā,
self-discipline, truth,
gift-giving – each of these
is equal to a yajña.

SECTION NINETY-ONE

1 "*Prabhu*-lord!" said Janamejaya.
"Kings are fond of yajñas,
mahā-ṛṣis are fond of tapasyā.
Saintly *vipra*-Brahmins
prefer peace-of-mind *śānti*,
equanimity and self-discipline.

2 It seems to me that nothing provides
the fruits that a yajña provides.
This is my view regarding yajñas,
and this is the right view.

3 So many finest of the twice-born
and any number of rājās
have gained fame now through yajñas
and heaven in the after-life.

4 The tousand-eyed rājā of the gods,
mahā-energetic Indra,
gained sovereign power over the gods
and fulfilment of all desires
by performing a multitude of yajñas
with profuse *dakṣiṇā*-gifts.

5 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, with the help
of Bhīma and Arjuna,
has equalled the rājā of the gods
in splendid valour.

6 What is it than that excited
the mongoose
to demean the Aśvamedha mahā-yajña
of the mahātmā rājā?"

7 Listen to me, O Bharata rājā,
(Vaiśaṃpāyana replied)
and I will describe in detail
all the traditional rites
of that yajña and, O lord of men,
the fruits they bring.

8 Once upon a time, long ago,
Śakra-Indra performed a yajña,
at which chants were intoned
by all the mahā-ṛṣis,
and the *ṛtvik*-priests busily
completed the rites.

9 The supremely guṇa-talented priests
poured *āhuti*-libations
in the sacred fire, and the gods
were being invoked,
in the presence of the excellent ṛṣis
who witnessed the ritual.

10 Eminently gratified *vipra*-Brahmins
sweetly chanted *āgama*-mantras,
and bull-brave *adhvaryu*-priests, O king,
showing no signs of tiredness,
went about their duty
of reciting the sacred texts.

11 At the time of the *ālambha*-sacrifice
of the animals,
when the sacrifical beasts were tied,
O mahārāja,
the mahā-ṛṣis of the yajña
were touched by compassion.

12 The plight of the helpless animals
so deeply stirred
the rich-in-tapasyā *tapodhana* ṛṣis
that they approached Śakra-Indra,
and said to him: "This yajña-rite
is not auspicious.

13 O city-destroying Puraṁdara-Indra!
If you seek mahā-dharma,
this is a foolish way of getting it.
No śāstra-text
advises the slaughter of animals
at a yajña.

14 *Prabhu*-lord! What you are doing
is destructive of dharma!
This yajña is a violation of dharma.
Dharma never advises violence.

15 If you must complete the ritual,
follow the principles of the *āgama*-texts.

16 Profoundly precious will be your dharma
if you follow the *āgama* ideals.
O hundred-eyed Sahasrākṣa-Indra!
Complete your yajña
with three-year old offerings of grain
such as barley and wheat.

17 That will be mahā-dharma, O Śakra-Indra,
bringing mahā-fruitful benefits."
But the words of the ṛṣis,
who had a darshan of truth,
by Śakakratu-Indra,
the god of a hundred sacrifices,

18 Were rejected, because he was proud
and confused by delusion.
A heated mahā-debate took place
during the yajña
between the tapasyā-dedicated objectors
and Śakra-Indra.

19 Regarding what should be offered
as sacrificial tribute –
moving-life animals or unmoving grain.
O Bharata descendant!
The truth-darshan-possessing ṛṣis,
irritated by the wrangling,

20 Approached Śakra-Indra with a proposal
to ask Uparicara-Vasu:
"Please resolve this dilemma of dharma
which puzzles us all.
O mahā-minded one!
We want the truth from you.

21 O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
O finest of kings!
What do the revealed *āgama*-scriptures say
about yajña-sacrifice?
Which is better – animal-sacrifice
or grains and rasa-juices?"

22 The earth-lord heard them; without seriously examining
both sides of the case,
he said: "A yajña can be performed
with whatever is available."

23 The king said this, and it sent him
to the hell of Rasātala.
The *prabhu*-lord, the ruler of the Cedis
had evaded the question.

24 When a real dilemma presents itself
no one person,
no matter how wise he may be,
should resolve it.
The only *prabhu*-lord arbitrator then
is Self-born Prajāpati Brahmā.

25 Gifts given with an impure motive,
by a wicked person,
no matter how large and luxurious,
are useless and futile.

26 No fame in this world,
nor in the world of *preta*-spirits,
is for a gift-giver
who is inspired by adharma,
who is cruel and violent,
who is ill-ātmaned.

27 No fruits of dharma for the fool
who performs yajnās
with dishonestly acquired wealth,
thereby doubting and defiling dharma.

28 And lowest of scoundrels is he,
the wicked-ātmaned man
who flaunts the flag of dharma
and lavishes gifts
on *vipra*-Brahmins
only to buy their trust.

29 He is doomed to a dreadful end –
the *vipra* libertine
who evilly amasses wealth,
passionately and obsessedly.

30 Greed and delusion drive him
to run after riches,
and with his clouded understanding
he exploits his fellow-beings.

31 Wealth acquired with such delusion,
yajnās performed with delusion,
gifts given with delusion –
dishonestly acquired wealth
brings no pleasurable fruits in this life,
and none in the after-life.

32 Those who are rich in tapasyā
and dedicated to dharma
and give to the best of their śakti
roots or fruits
or herbs or even water –
they attain heaven.

33 This is dharma
This is mahā-yoga
This is gift-giving
This is compassion for creatures
This is brahmacarya
This is truth
This is lovingkindness
This is patience
This is fortitude –

34 This is the eternal root
of Sanātana Dharma.
We have heard this was the ideal
of Viśvāmitra and other kings.

35 Viśvāmitra
Asita
Janaka
and other earth-lords
Kakṣasena
Arṣṭiṣeṇa
and the earth-ruler Sindhudvīpa –

36 They and many other kings
with the wealth of their tapasyā
and their honestly earned riches,
abiding by truth and gift-giving,
obtained the supreme perfection
known as *paramikāṁ siddhiṁ.*

37 Brahmins, Kṣatriyas,
Vaiśyas and Śūdras,
with the help of their tapasyā
purify themselves in the fire of dharma
and enter the realm of heaven,
O Bharata descendant.

SECTION NINETY-TWO

1 "*Bhagavan*! Revered one!"
said Janamejaya.
"Granted that heaven is attained
by the giving-away of wealth
earned by honest means.
You explain everything so excellently.
Explain to me clearly
the implications of your statement.

2 You have, O Brahmin, mentioned
the mahā-fruitful result
of the giving of *saktu*-grains
by the *ucchavṛtti*-vowed Brahmin.
I have no doubt at all
that what you say is right.

3 But how can this perfect principle apply
to all yajñas?
O bull-brave twice-born!
Explain this to me."

4 Since you ask (replied Vaiśampāyana),
crusher of foes,
let me narrate the *itihāsa*-story
of Agastya's mahā-yajña.

5 Long ago, mahārāja, it so happened
that mahā-energetic Agastya,
keeping in mind the welfare of all creatures,
took a twelve-year *dīkṣā*-initiation.

6 In the sacrifice of the mahātmā,
the *hotṛ*-priests
blazed with the effulgence of fire,
and they included
those who subsisted on roots and fruits,
who subsisted an grains
pounded only on stone-slabs,
and subsisters on sunrays,

7 Subsisters on food they received
as alms from others,
subsisters on food offered first
to gods in a yajña,
and subsisters on food partaken
after careful deliberation.
In that assembly were *yati*-asceties
and *bhikṣu*-mendicants.

8 All of them were dharma-devoted
and sense-disciplined anger-conquerors.
strong-willed and pride-free
and eschewers of *hiṁsā*-vilence,

9 Stable in the purity of character,
never demeaned by their senses.
These were the mahā-ṛṣis
who participated in the yajña.

10 Bhagavān Agastya had arranged
for a plentiful supply of food.
The planning was excellently done,
to the best of his ability.

11 There were many other munis too
who had performed mahā-sacrifices.
But as soon as Agastya initiated
the preliminaries of his yajña,
thousand-eyed Indra, O incomparable Bharata,
stopped sending rain on earth.

12 During the intervals of the yajña, O rājā,
the pure-atmaned munis
happened to discuss the work of Agastya,
and they said:

13 "Envy-and-malice-free Agastya
is our *yajamāna*-priest
who provides food to everyone.
But Parjanya-Indra
has stopped sending rain.
How will crops flourish?

14 O saintly *vipra*-Brahmins!
The muni's mahā-sacrifice
is a twelve-year long celebration.
But the rain-god
is going to withhold rain
for those twelve years.

15 Keeping that seriously in mind,
do something
to help the wise, devoted-to-tapasyā
mahā-ṛṣi Agastya.

16 When he heard these sentiments,
the illustrious Agastya,

17 Bowed his head before the munis
and pleased them, saying:
"If Vyāsa-Indra witholds rain
for twelve years,

18 I will perform the Cintā-yajña,
the Mind-Sacrifice.
This is what is ordained
by the eternal tradition.
If Vāsava-Indra withholds rain
for twelve years,

19 I will perform the Sparśa-yajña,
the Touch-Sacrifice.
This is what is ordained
by the eternal tradition.
If Vāsava-Indra withholds rain
for twelve years,

20 I will by the power of my vows
perform the sacrifice
of pure and perfect dhyana-meditation
and materialise all
that is required for all these yajñas.
I have for many years
planned the details of this seed-yajña.

21 I know what seeds will be needed.
I visualise no obstacles.
Nothing can frustrate my sacrifice,
no one can stop it –

22 Let the rain-god send rain,
or let him withhold rain,
how does it matter to me?
If Indra decides
that he is not going
to grant my desires,

23 I will make myself Indra
and care for my people.
Every creature will survive
on the appropriate food.

24 I will arrange for more food,
should that become necessary.
Today, all the gold there is,
whatever treasure there is

25 In the three worlds, will by itself
become mine!
The celestial apsarās, the Kinnaras
and bands of Gandharvas,

26 The Viśvāvasus and all the others –
let them face me!
And all the wealth that is found
in the Northern Kuru territory –

27 Let it come tome by itself
and glorify my yajña!
Heaven, and the dwellers of heaven,
and Dharma himself!

28 No sooner had that muni of tapasyā
said these words
than they all appeared before him,
refulgent Agastya,
who blazed with the radiance
of infinite energy.

29 All the munis witnessed the power
of his tapasyā,
and they rejoiced, and were spellbound;
they said, mahā-seriously:

30 "We are delighted by your words.
We have no desire
to see any decline of tapasyā
We are happy
with any yajñas you perform
with honest means and material.

31 Yajña, *dīkṣā*-initiation, *homa*-fire, –
all our needs are met here.
We partake of honestly-earned food,
we perform our sva-karma.

32 We have observed the requirements
of lawful traditions,
we have studied the Vedas with brahmacarya,
we have offered the proper prayers.

33 We will practise only such tapasyā
as is approved
by the traditions of dharma.
It appears you approve
iabstaining from *hiṁsā*-violence
in all yajñas,

34 And we are pleased, O *prabhu*-lord,
with your advocacy
of ahiṁsa in your yajña-performance.
O finest of the twice-born!

35 After the sacrifice is completed,
we will return to our homes."
Even as they were saying this,
Puraṁdara-Devarāja-Indra,

36 The supremely mahā-energetic-deity,
impressed by the power
of the tapasyā of Agastya,
drenched the earth with rain.
Indeed, till the successful completion
of the yajña
of that ṛṣi who was endowed
with illimitable brilliance,

37 Parjanya-Indra, O Janamejaya,
poured copious rain
satisfying the needs of all.
Tridaseśvara-Indra,
the ruler of heaven
gratified Agastya, O rājā-ṛṣi,
arriving at the Yajña-site,
led by Bṛhaspati.

38 After the completion of the yajña,
supremely satisfied Agastya
paid his pūjā-respects to the mahā-munis,
and bid them farewell.

39 "Tell me: that golden-headed mongoose,"
asked Janamejaya,
"who spoke in the language of men –
who was he?"

40 You did not ask me earlier
(replied Vaiśampāyana),
so I did not tell you.
Let me tell you now
who that mangoose was
who spoke in the language of men.

41 A long time ago, it so happened
that Jamadagni
wanted to perform a *śrāddha*-ceremony.
His *homa*-cow
approached him, and he decided
to milk her himself.

42 He poured the milk in a pot
new and sturdy and sanctified.
Assuming the appearance of anger,
Dharma entered the pot.

43 Dharma did so in order to test
that finest of ṛṣis
How will he react
to this displeasing deed?
With that in mind,
Dharma curdled the milk.

44 But the muni, O rājā,
knew it was anger,
so he did not lose his temper
Anger then appeared
before him as a Brahmin lady.
Defeated by the muni,
indignant anger said
to that incomparable Bhārgava:

45 "O finest of the Bhārgavas!
You have defeated me.
It is said that the Bhārgavas
are a wrathful race.
That cannot be true, I think,
for you have defeated me.

46 *Prabhu*-lord! I am your slave today.
O mahā-ātmaned one!
Such Kśamā-fortitude and patience!
O pious sadhu!
I fear your tapasyā!
Have mercy on me!"

47 "I have seen you, O anger,"
said Jamadagni
"as you really are.
You are free to go.
You have not harmof me.
I have nothing against you.

48 I placed the milk here
for the mahā-fortune-favoured *pitṛs*.
Go to them if you want to,
and find out what they think."

49 Fear-stricken anger
fled from the ṛṣi's presence.
It was the *pitṛs* who cursed him
to turn into a mongoose.

50 He started pleasing the *pitṛs*
in order to escape his curse.
They told him: "You curse will end
when you revile Dharma."

51 So he roamed about in places
where yajñas were performed,
specially dharmāsanya sacred forests.
He came to the yajña
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira

52 He mocked Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
and alluding
to a *prastha* of *sukta*-grain
So Dharma as anger
Was freed of the curse
and became one
with Yudhiṣṭhira
who is Dharma.

53 All this took place at the yajña
of mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira.
And then, the mongoose disappeared
in front of our eyes.

This internationally accepted system of Roman transliteration of the Devanagari alphabet is followed in this transcreation.

VOWELS

Guttural	अ	आ
	a	ā
Palatal	इ	ई
	i	ī
Labial	उ	ऊ
	u	ū
Dental	ऋ	
	ṛ	
Guttural-Palatal	ए	ऐ
	e	ei
Guttural-Labial	ओ	औ
	o	au

CONSONANTS

Guttural	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	ह	:
	k	kh	g	gh	ṅ	h	ḥ
Palatal	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ	य	श
	c	ch	j	jh	ñ	y	ś
Lingual	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	र	ष
	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ	r	ṣ
Dental	त	थ	द	ध	न	ल	स
	t	th	d	dh	n	l	s
Labial	प	फ	ब	भ	म	व	
	p	ph	b	bh	m	v	

Anusvāra = ṁ

CANTO XIV

Āśvamedhikaparva : The Chronicle of Restoration

Chapter 80 *Āśvamedhikaparva* (*Āśvamedhikaparvan* in Cal.Ed. Chap. 93) : Relating to the 'Horse-Sacrifice' of Yudhiṣṭhira after his installation as king.

Sec. 1–96 [Cr. Ed.]; 1–15 (Cal.Ed.).

i) *Yudhiṣṭhirasāntvanaṃ*: Consolation of *Yudhiṣṭhira.*

ii) *Vyāsavākyaṃ*: Instructions of *Vyāsa.*

iii) *Saṁvarta Maruttiyaṃ*: History of *Saṁvarta* and *Marutta.*

iv) Vasudevavakyam : A speech by *Vāsudeva.*

v) *Hastināpurapraveśa* : Entry into *Hāstināpura.*

vi) Indraprasthe Kṛṣṇārjunah Sabhaviharah : A time for recreation for Kṛṣṇā and Arjuna in Indraprastha.

vii) Anugita (Anugitaparvan in Cal.Ed. Chap. 94): An abridged from *Gītā*, repeated by *Kṛṣṇā* at the request of *Arjuna.*

viii) *Śrikṛṣṇāsya Dvārakāḥ Prati Prasthānaṃ*: *Śrikṛṣṇās* departure for *Dvārakā.*

ix) *Uṭṭaṅkopākhyānaṃ*: Episode of *Uṭṭaṅka.*

x) *Vāsudevena Vasudevaṅprati Yuddhākhyānaṃ*: *Kṛṣṇā 's* description of the battle of *Kurukṣetra* to *Vā sudeva.*

xi) *Vāsudevena Abhimanyoḥ Śrāddhadānaṃ*: Performance of obsequies for *Abhimanyu by Vā sudeva (Kṛṣṇa).*

xii) *Pāṇḍavanaṅ Maruttanidhilābhaḥ* : Acquisition of the wealth of *Marutta* by the Pāṇḍavas.

xiii) *Pārikṣitasañjivanaṃ*: Revival of Pariksita.

xiv) *Yudhiṣṭhira Yajñadikṣā* : The sacrificial initiation of *Yudhiṣṭhira.*

xv) Arjunasya *Aśvānugamanaṃ* : Arjuna's journey after the 'sacrificial-horse'.

a) *Trigartavijayaḥ*: Conquest *Trigarta.*

b) *Vajradattaparājaya* : Defeat of *Vajradata.*

c) *Saindhavaparājaya*: Defeat of the Saindhava's.

d) *Babhruvāhanayuddhaṃ*: The combat with *Babhruvāhana.*

e) Māgadhaparājaya: Defeat of the *Māgadhas.*

f) *Ekalavyasutaparājaya*: Defeat of the son of Ekalavya.

g) *Gāndhāraparajaya*: Defeat of the '*Gāndhāra's.*

h) *Yajñayatṇanirmanaṃ* : The construction of the

sacrificial altar and posts.

i) *Yajñasamṛdhi*: The splendour of the sacrifice.

j) *Arjunapratyāgaṃanaṃ*: The return of *Arjuna.*

xvi) *Yūpa* : The immolations.

xvii) *Yajñasamāptiḥ* : The end of the *Aśvamedha yajña* or horse-sacrifice.

xviii) *Nakulopākhyānaṃ*: Episode of the mongoose *(nakula)*

Courtesy:

Madhusraba Dasgupta
Samsad Companion to the Mahābhārata
(Sahitya Samsad, Kolkata, 1999)

Corrections

THE SABHĀ PARVA
Book II

The following śloka 17 is missing; it should be inserted after śloka 16. ślokas 17, 18, 19 on pp. 412-413 should be 18, 19, 20:

17 "Rājā," said Śakuni, "Mādrī's twin sons
you love – they are now mine.
Can it be that you love more than the twins
Bhīmasena and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna?"

The following lines should be added to śloka 14 (p. 409):

A sixty-year old husband
is wasted on a young wife;
sensible advice is wasted
on this Bharata descendant.

ॐ The Mahābhārata

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Vyāsa Mahābhārata Sāvitrī-Satyavān Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Nala-Damayantī Kathā
Vyāsa Mahābhārata Śiśupāla-Vadha Kathā
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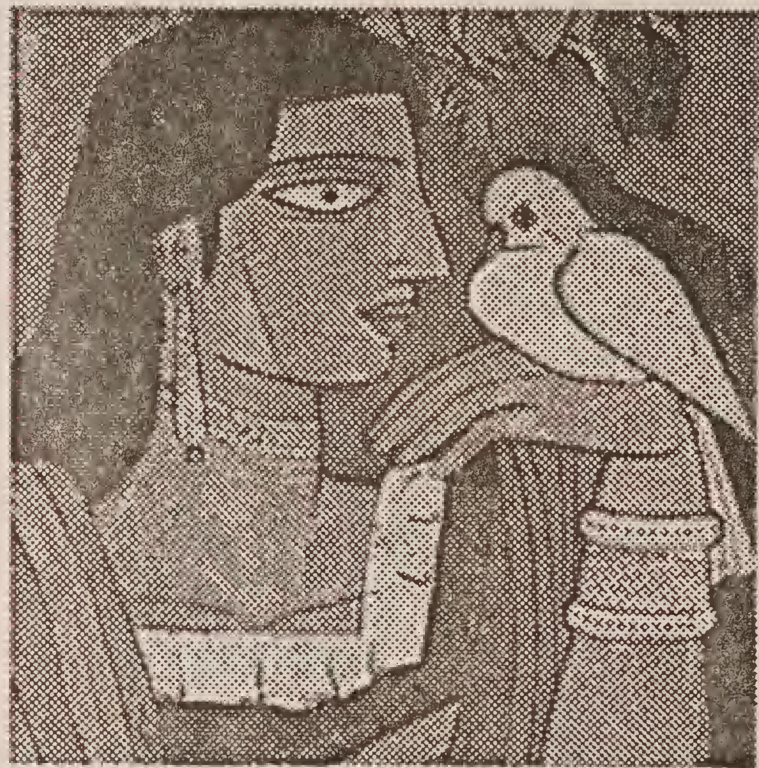


P. Lāl reading the 334th weekly Sunday session of his English transcreation of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata on 2 July 2006 at G. D. Birla Sabhagar, Kolkata.

[*Sketch by Nilima Sen-Gangopadhyay*]

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READING SESSION

GD Birla Sabhagar

Professor P Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Raja Dhritarashtra of the joint offensive by Arjuna and Bhima against the Kauravas on Kuruksetra, in the 423rd weekly Sunday session of his *sloka*-by-*sloka* English transcreation of Vyasa's *Mahabharata*, presented by Sanskriti Sagar on May 4 at 11 am. P Lal also reads the *Mahabharata* daily on cable TV Tara News channel at 7.20 am and 7.20 pm.

Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad

Professor P Lal will deliver the Founders Day lecture on "The Message of the *Mahabharata*" on May 1 at 6 pm.

THE TELEGRAPH

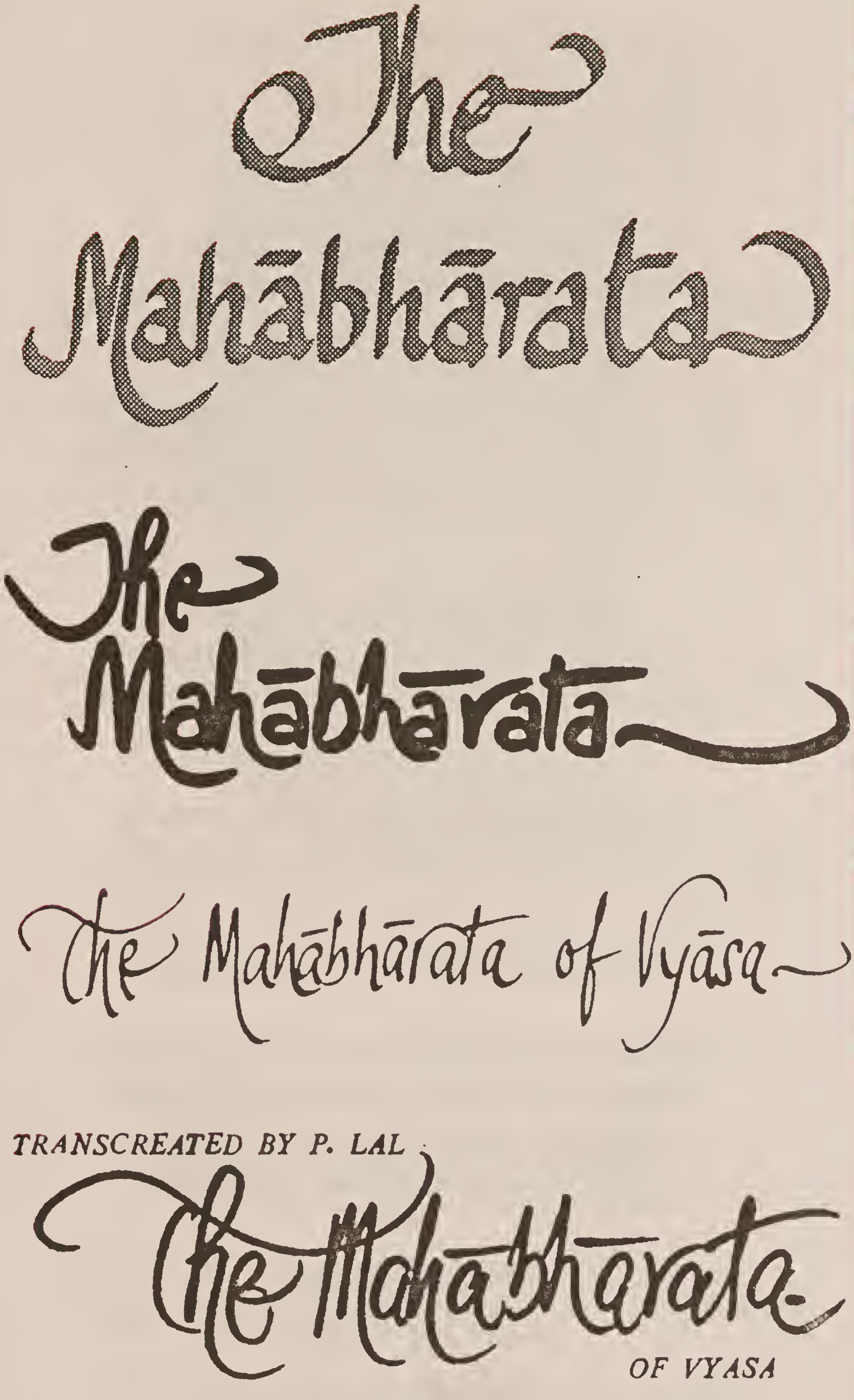
READING

May 4 at G.D. Birla Sabhagar; 11 am: Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report of Karna attacking the Panchalas, and Arjuna and Bhima launching a joint counter-offensive, in the 423rd weekly session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's *Mahabharata*.

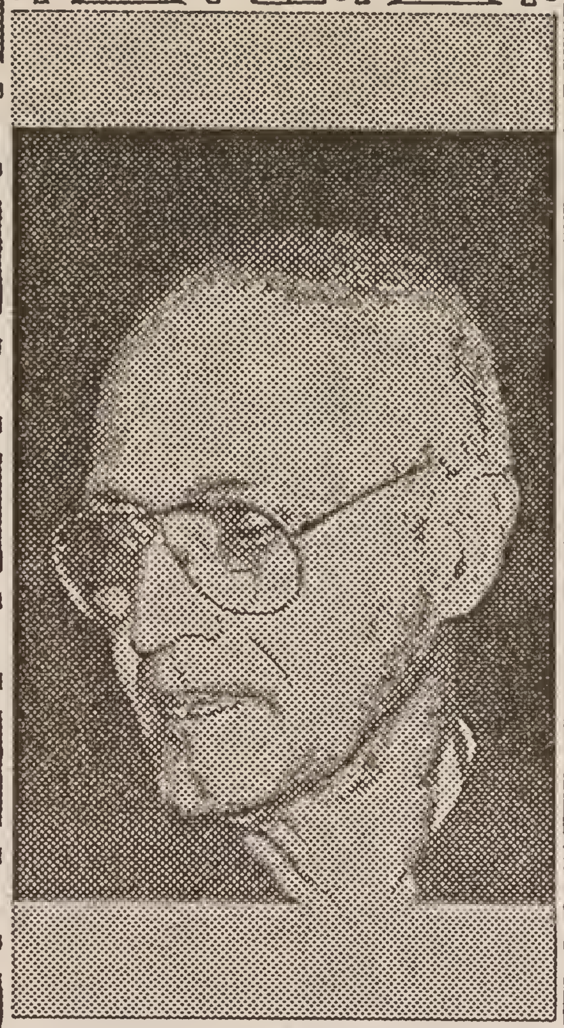
The Sunday Statesman

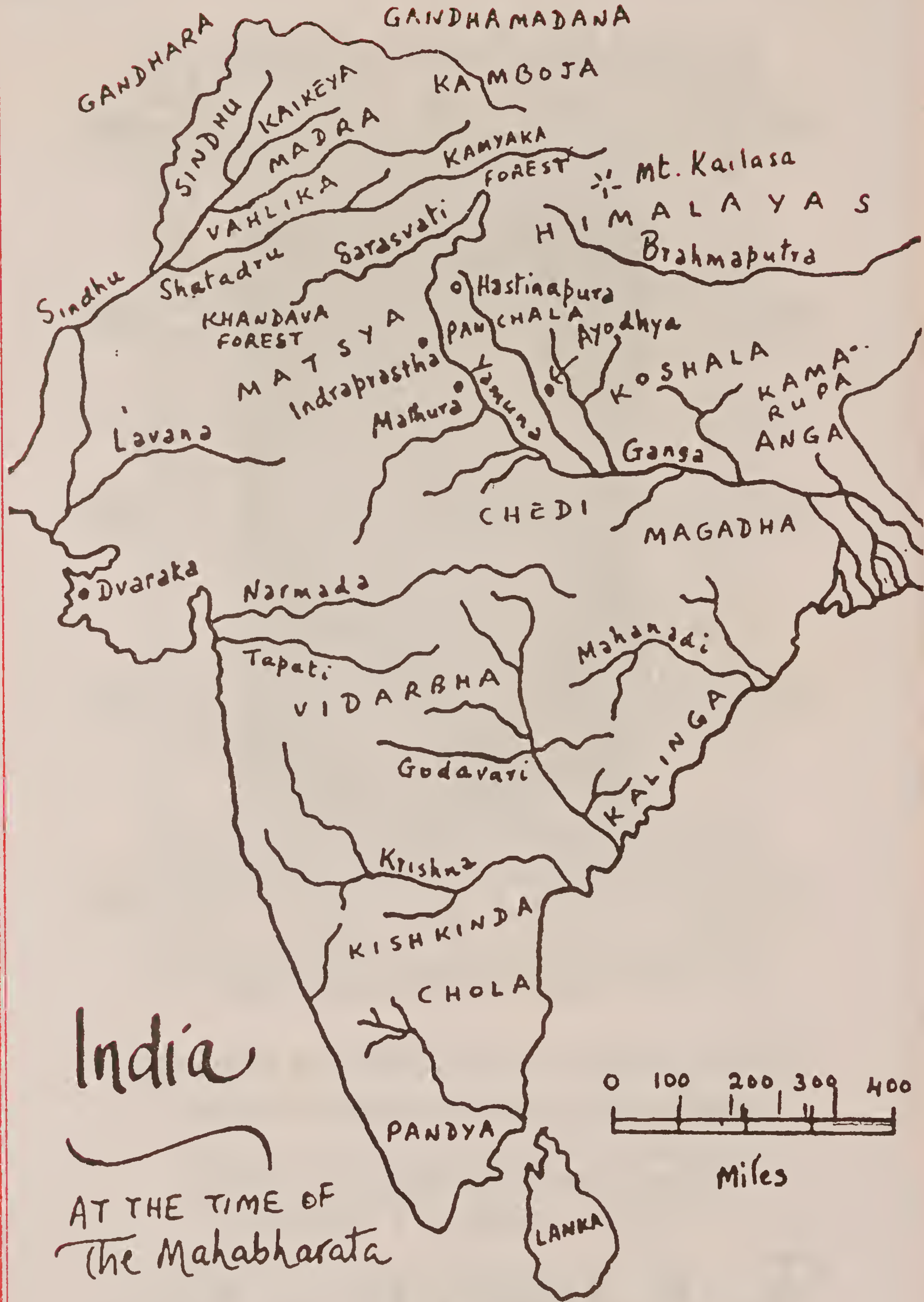
ENGAGEMENTS

- Prof P Lal reads the joint offensive of Arjuna and Bhima on Kuruksetra in the 423rd session of his English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata at G D Birla Sabhagar; 11-00



The evolution of wrap-around title-flaps of P. Lāl's monthly Mahābhārata fascicules of the Sabhā Parva that appeared from WRITERS WORKSHOP in 1969-1970 as hardbound volumes 27-37.



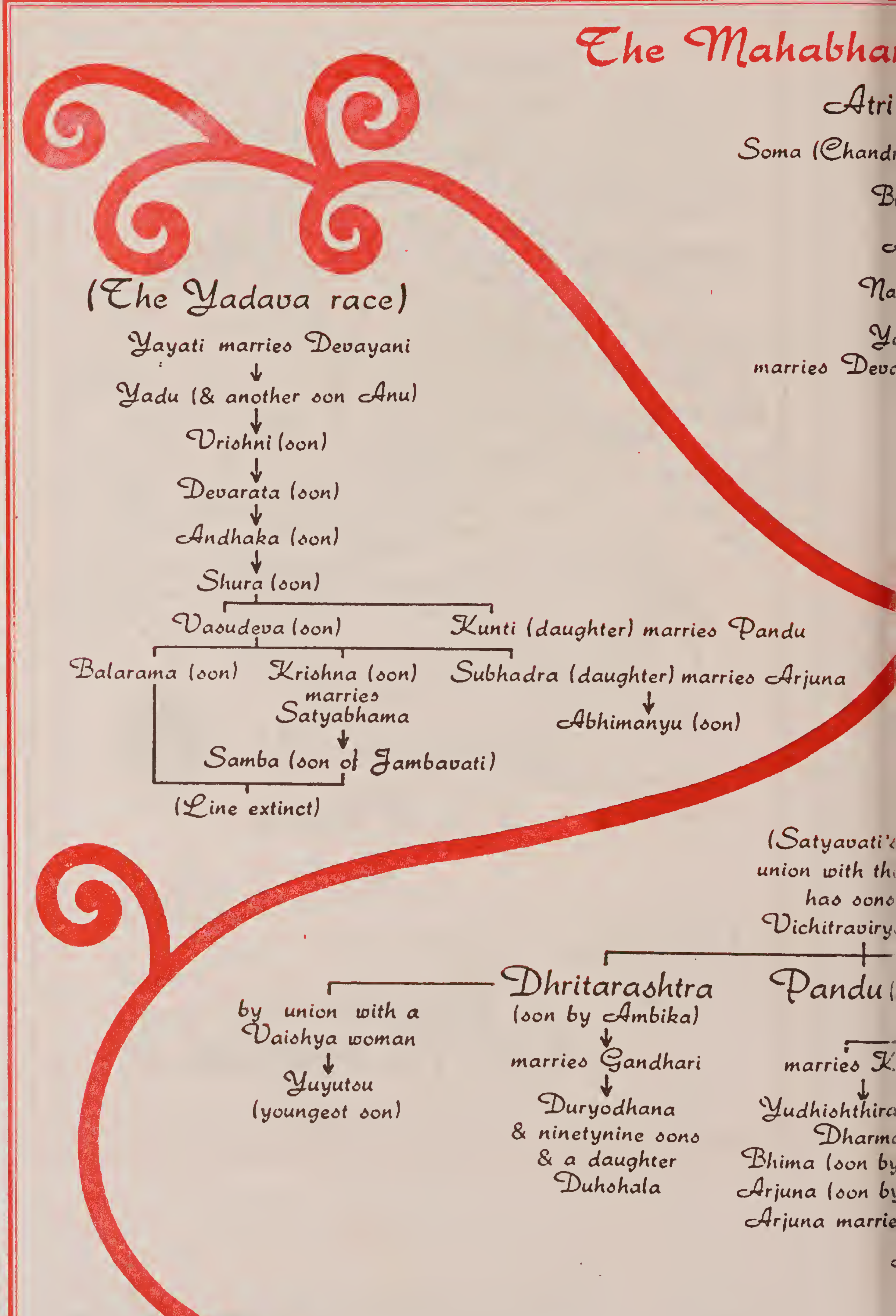


Sketch by P. Lal



Ārya-varta
at the time of the Mahābhārata

Sketch by P. Lal based on *The Historical Atlas of South Asia*
[University of Minnesota]



Sketch by Srimati Lal

Family Tree

Rishi

idu) the Moon

n)

)

on)

n)

Sharmishtha

(The Paurava & Kaurava race)

Yayati marries Sharmishtha

↓

Puru (& 2 other sons: Druhyu & Turvasu)

↓

Dushyanta (son) marries Shakuntala

↓

Bharata (son)

↓

Hastin (son)

↓

Kuru (son)

↓

Shantanu (son) marries Satyavati

re-marriage union with Ganga

↓

Bhishma (son)

asa

; her pre-marriage

Parashara: Vyasa

two widows of

bika & Ambalika)

Chitrangada

(son) (dies childless)

Vichitravirya (son)

marries Ambika & Ambalika

(their eldest sister Amba,

reborn male as Shikhandin,

kills Bhishma in the war)

Ambalika)

Vidura (son by low caste woman)

and

Madri

↓

y

Nakula & Sahadeva

(twin sons by Ashvins)

)

a)

adra

anyu (son) marries Uttara

↓

Parikshit (son)

↓

Janamejaya (son)

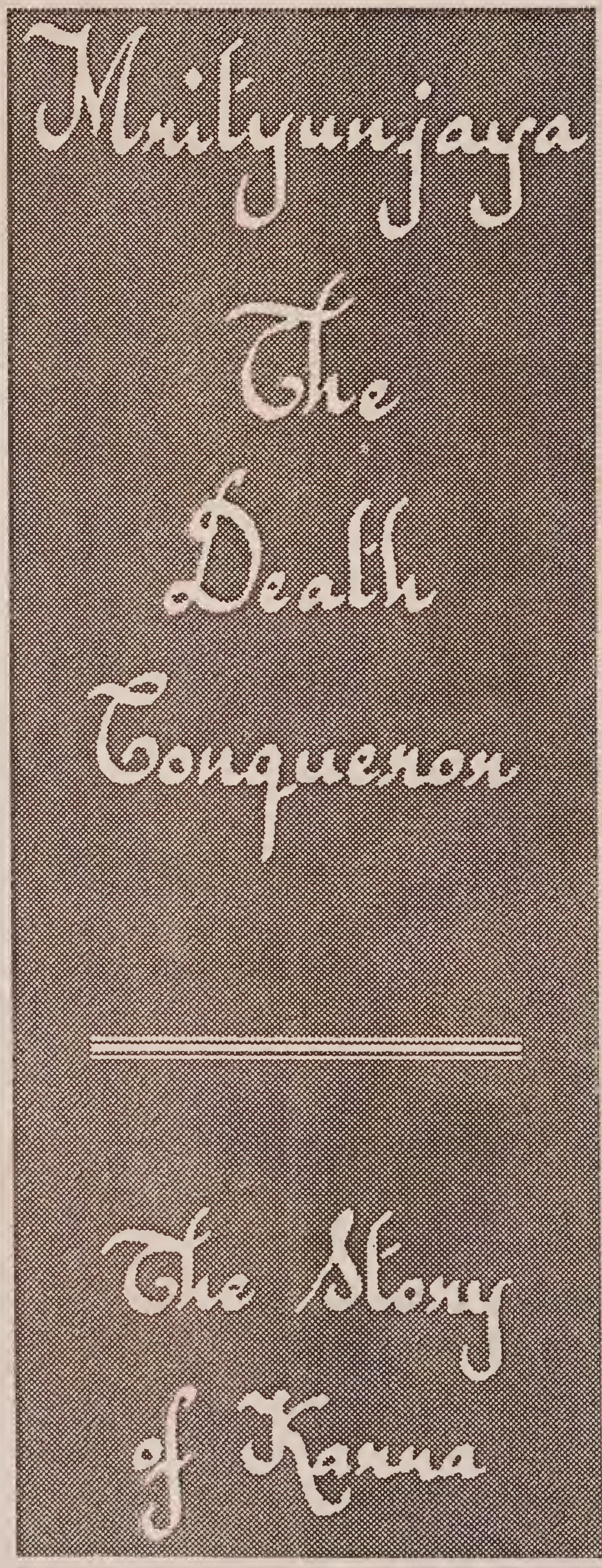


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Writers Workshop
Indian Creative Writing in English

WRITERS WORKSHOP was founded in 1958. It consists of a group of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language, to play a creative role in Indian literature, through original writing and transcreation from India, the Commonwealth, and other English-using territories. Discussions are held on Sunday morning at 162/92 Lake Gardens, Kolkata 700 045, India, and diffusion done through a series of Bird-logo books issued under the WORKSHOP imprint. Since October 1999 the Sunday one-hour morning session is devoted to a śloka-by-śloka reading by P. Lal at the Sanskriti Sagar Library in Calcutta, of his complete English transcreation of the Mahābhārata of Vyāsa, planned to continue for the next ten years, till the epic is completed. Since 1971 the WORKSHOP has laid increasing emphasis on its publishing programme. A complete, descriptive 90-page illustrated checklist of over 3200 books and cassettes is available for Rs. 20.

The WORKSHOP is non-profit and non-political. It involves writers who are sympathetic to the ideals and principles commonly accepted as embodied in creative writing; it is concerned with practice not theorising, helpful criticism not iconoclasm, the torch not the sceptre. Not impressed by desire for quick fame and money by pandering to the increasing sexual over-permissiveness and explicitness in 20th and 21st century "literature", and religious intolerance and hatred masquerading as "freedom in creative writing", WRITERS WORKSHOP upholds the primacy of stable ethical and moral values, and prefers writing that enshrines humanist principles, which are of special relevance in the context of the multi-cultural historical palimpsest of the civilisation known as India.

Further details are available from the Director, P. Lal, at the WORKSHOP address: 162/92 Lake Gardens, Kolkata 700045, India (Phone: 2417-4325, 2417-2683 and 3095-9727 E-mail: profsky@cal.vsnl.net.in) Browse in the WW Book Nook Website: www.writersworkshopindia.com

Writers Workshop ~ A Credo by P. Lal

Glory be to Mahakala. It is now 2008. I am four score. Time for some home truths. Because WRITERS WORKSHOP has close to 3200 separate titles in its checklist (published over 49 years 1958-2007), and because it has averaged around 100 titles each year since 1995, there is a misconception that it is an Indian publishing leviathan. (No other publisher in India has that many titles on its annual list.) The truth is much less awesome. WRITERS WORKSHOP has no office; it operates from my residence, from the living-room and a multi-purpose bedroom. It has no secretary; my "secretary" is a three-tiered Godrej filing cabinet. It has no editor, no "readers" to inspect, evaluate and OK typescripts; I do all three tasks. It has no proofreader; I perform the nitty-gritty of deleting, accreting and correcting. It has no "assistant" to acknowledge or follow up letters; I do all that too. It has no typewriter; I reply in longhand. (From 2004, kowtowing to the hi-tech convenience, I sometimes seek help from my computer-savvy grand-daughter Shuktara to e-mail replies to insistent and urgent enquiries for WW information.) It has no retail or wholesale distribution "outlet"; there is only a cubby-hole of a kiosk at my residence (8 feet x 4 feet roughly) called the Book Nook, where a dedicated young assistant attends to intermittent sales of WW books. This Lake Gardens kiosk opened in 1998, 40 years after WW's inception.

How then has WW survived? Without plush foundations to back it, without advertisement, without large-hearted patrons? Initially, by the skin of our teeth (1958-1964). Then (1965-1990) by my visits to hard currency lands, specially Great Britain, the USA and Australia on lecture assignments and visiting professorships on two dozen or so occasions, and pumping the shekels thus earned to keep alive a gasping ideal.

Alternative publishing is desperately needed wherever commercial publication rules. WW is *not* a professional publishing house. It does not print well-known names; it makes names known and well known, and then leaves them in the loving clutches of the so-called "free" market (which can be and is very cut-throat and very expensive). It is not sad, it is obnoxious, to plead, as publishers do, "I will not publish poetry because it does not sell." Most English book publishing today in boom-time India and outside is book-dumping. There is a nexus between high-profile PR-conscious book publishers, semi-literate booksellers, moribund public and state libraries, poorly informed and nepotistic underlings in charge of book review pages and supplements of most national newspapers and magazines, and biased bulk purchases of near worthless books by bureaucratic institutions set up–believe it or not!–to inform, educate and elevate the reading public.

Because WW goes in for serious creative writing, and because there is no satisfactory distribution network for such writing, its terms of publication are unique. I must be the only publisher in the world who knows when and where every book is sold; I have the name and address of every buyer of a WW book. Upon my acceptance of a typescript, an agreement form is sent to the writer. *All* copyright remains with the writer. Poetry appears in 350 copies; prose in 500. Ten per cent (35 copies of the poetry book, 50 of the prose) is given in lieu of royalty. The writer is also expected to make an advance purchase of 100 copies of his or her book, for sale or distribution as he or she pleases. Printing is done in Calcutta hand-operated presses, situated in the residences of their owners. The whole process is a cottage industry style low-key entrepreneurship, in the belief that small is not only beautiful but viable as well. Vanity and sponsored publishing? Yes, I am humanly vain about it and I do sponsor what I think is good writing. If any lover of literature will offer to subsidise, with no strings attached, striking new work by talented Indian poets, fiction-writers and belles-lettrists, please get in touch with me. The gesture will be acknowledged, appreciated, accepted, and implemented. Such Good Samaritan generosities, not market forces, are at the root of civilised and significant publishing the world over.

For more information, browse in the WW IndEngLit Website: www.writersworkshopindia.com

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